

Socialist ORGANISER

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London Health Emergency
NHS: DAY OF ACTION AGAINST CUTS AND
CLOSURES

Saturday May 26

Morning: local campaigns in most of London's 31
Health Districts will be out on the streets with
leaflets and exhibitions.

Afternoon: Demonstration at St. George's, Hyde
Park Corner, 3pm.

TUC: OFF YOUR KNEES!

THE MINERS' strike is biting.

Top Tories are pressing the Coal Board to shift its ground — or at least to give the appearance of shifting its ground. Cabinet ministers, reports the Guardian, "are privately advocating a slowing of the colliery closure programme".

And media-boasted 'back to work' movements have flopped.

Arthur Scargill has made it plain that the miners are interested, not in slowing down job cuts, but in stopping them.

TUC and Labour leaders, however, have shown that they are interested only in finding a formula — any formula — to end the struggle.

Len Murray demonstrated the style in which he intends to conduct his last few months as a lame-duck TUC general secretary by denouncing the Yorkshire/Humberside strike for the miners on May 21, and the Welsh day of action on June 12. The TUC finance and general purposes committee, and the Labour Party/TUC liaison committee, endorsed Murray by their silence.

Neil Kinnock and his energy front-bencher, one-time leftist Stan Orme, have been busy playing compromise-brokers. While local Labour Parties across the country are collecting funds and organising support activities for the miners, Kinnock and Orme are trying to engineer what the dissident Tories want — a deal in which the Coal Board appears to give some ground but actually concedes nothing.

The TUC has been angling to get itself in as a mediator between the miners and the Tories.

That's what the 'new realism' means — the labour movement's leaders not mobilising the movement against the Tories, but trying to negotiate away any struggle.

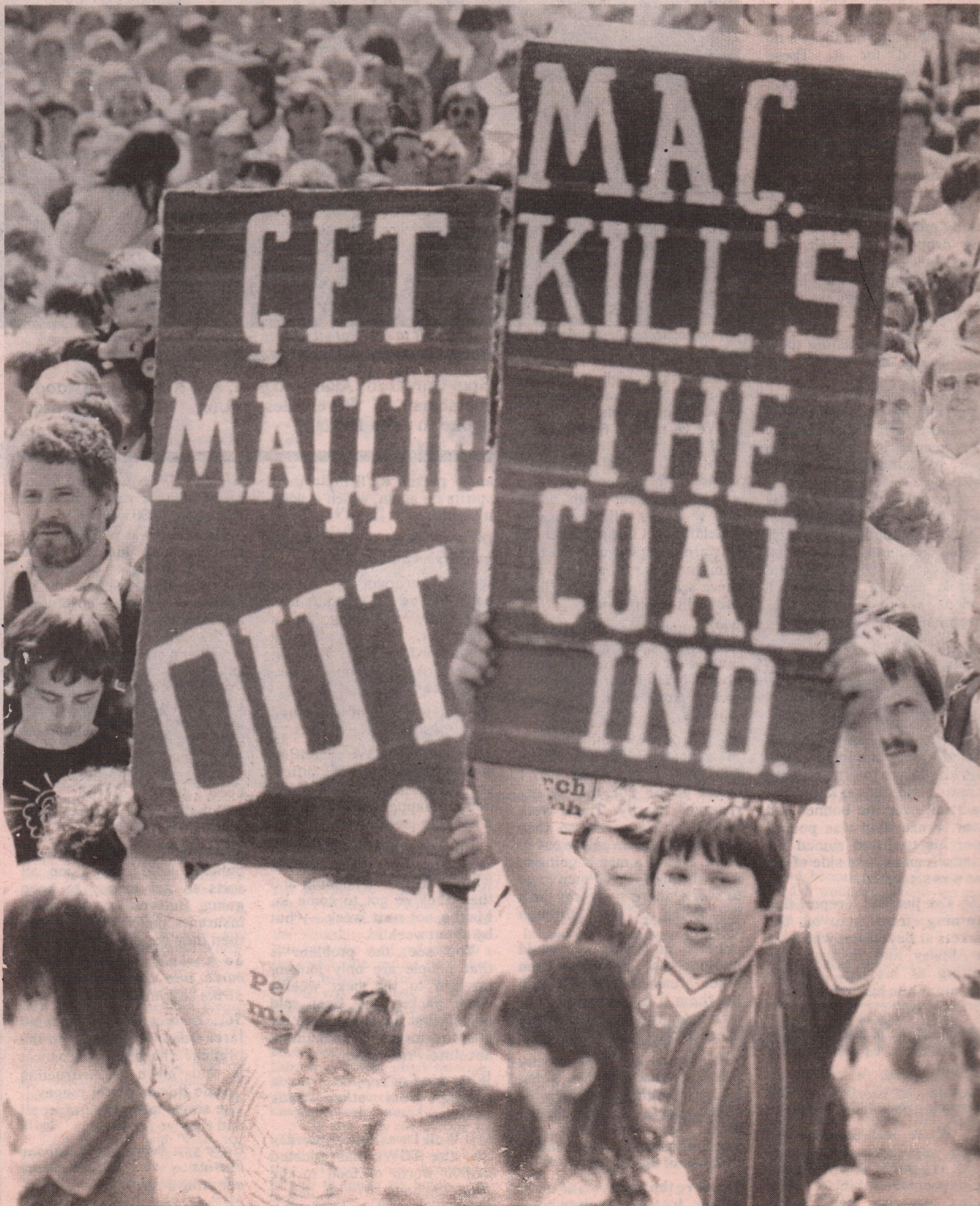
Now that we are beginning to get the Tories rattled for the first time in a long while, the last thing we want is to give them escape clauses. What's needed is to develop the struggle towards a general strike. And if the TUC and Labour leaders won't do that, then the rank and file must.

Rail should unite with miners to beat Tories

THE rail unions NUR and ASLEF are due to start an overtime ban in pursuit of their pay claim on May 30. The action is long overdue (the settlement date was April 16) and it does not include Sunday working or workshops staff — who, with guards, are the section most under threat of closure or privatisation.

16,000 workshops staff are due to go by 1986 — and at the workshops grades conference they voted unanimously to be in the action due to start on May 30.

The overtime ban could still have a substantial impact. But what is the point of dribs and drabs? All out strike action now, alongside the miners, is the way to save both rail workshop and pit jobs, and win the pay claim.



MARTIN SHAKESHAF (1/1)



'Let's go flying'

Notts strikers say: spread the pickets

KG. The Ollerton Women's Action Group had a meeting Tuesday night. My wife chaired the meeting — and she had a nice 14 page speech which she incited them with — and the next thing, there were 40-odd women picketing Ollerton on Wednesday morning.

SC. The policemen just waded into the women. It was hard for us because we had been arrested once and we couldn't get over to them — we just had to stand there and watch it, it was bloody terrible.

What was the response of the men on the picket lines?

SC. It was great, brilliant, absolutely fantastic, there's no other word for it. These women are working now a 20 hour day, every day. They're getting up at 4 in the morning, going to the picket; they come back from the picket and open the soup kitchen; work in the soup kitchen until 2 in the afternoon; then they're going home and looking after the family and kids. They're literally dropping on their feet when they get to bed. They're as well organised as us, if not better — and they're more determined.

AH. We've been telling them for weeks now about the police, but they've only been hearing it by word of mouth from us. Since they've been up there and have actually experienced it, they're even more hardened now — to win this fight.

The police harassment is definitely getting worse. They're stepping up their patrols around the streets. When it first started the patrols used to go out at 8 o'clock in the morning and afternoon shifts. But now it's virtually 24 hours a day.

What is the truth about the stories of intimidation and violence?

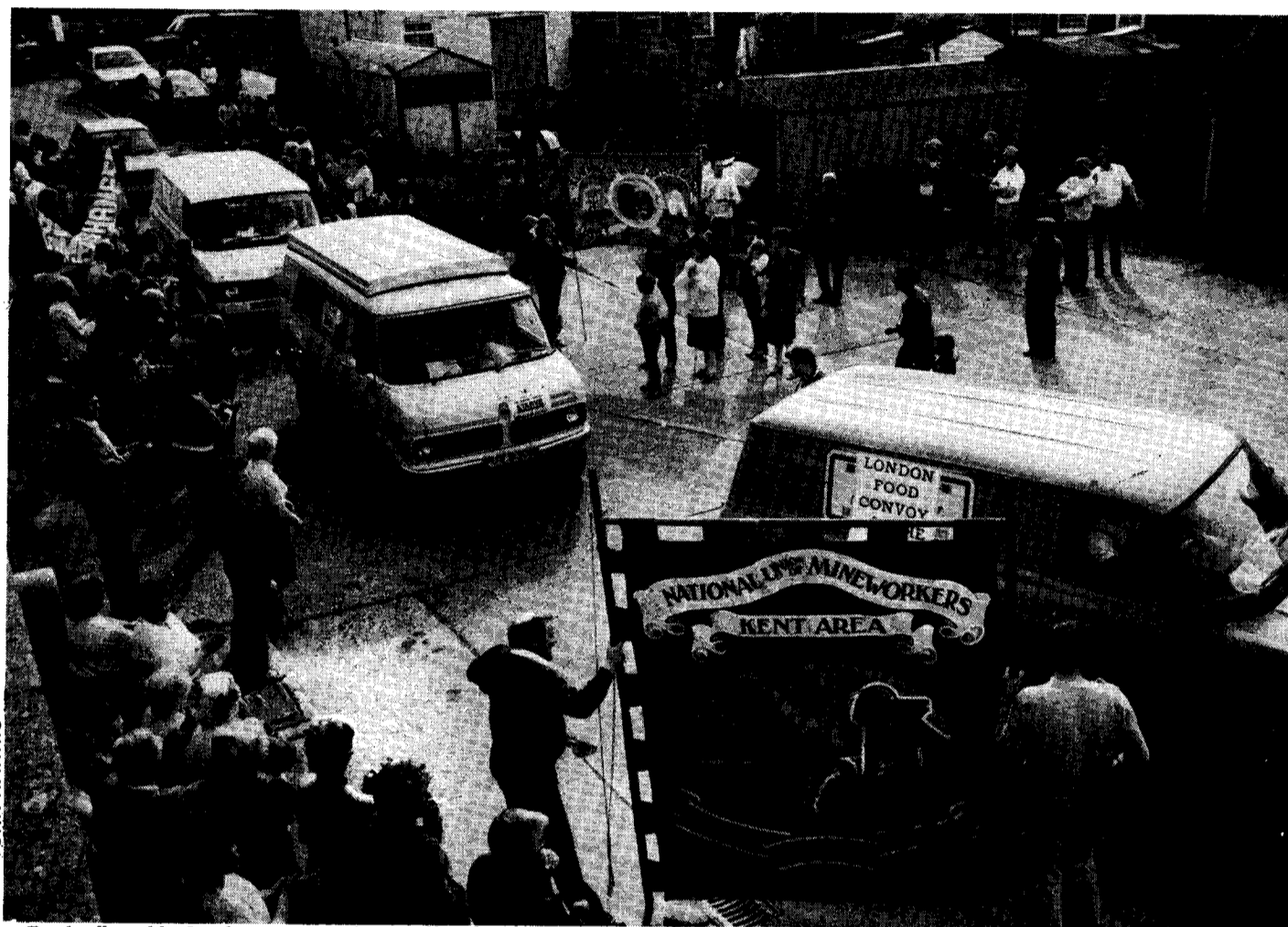
SC. One example is the branch treasurer at Bevercotes. He pulled his car into the car park at the boozery one night. 15 minutes later the car had white paint all over the bonnet and door, brake fluid was poured over his roof and ruined his windscreen and the side of his car was scratched.

AH. I've just had a report this morning from one of the pickets at Bevercotes who lives at Aldsley, and the scabs are getting at his car. They've put sugar into his carburettor.

SC. They'll try to hit the cars first, because if they stop us picketing it saves them driving through us.

How do you think the strike should develop now?

SC. We're just banging our heads against a brick wall here. We might as well go and help somebody else. The police presence here is so



Food collected by London supporters is sent off to the Kent pit villages

much, we can't do anything. We can't peacefully picket the pit now. So we might as well go on flying pickets.

We've tried a firm in Tuxford that makes mining equipment, and got a very good response from them. We have an arrangement with them now that they will not cross an official picket line anywhere in this area. If a wagon from that firm turns up at any pit and there's an official picket line, they will not cross it.

AH. Some Yorkshire lads were here this week and they've invited me and a few others to go to Yorkshire for a week and picket from there — power stations, etc.

SC. I would say that if every man that works in this village were out, that's about 3 to 1 to the police. Plus they've got reserves nearby. There were 10,000 at Harworth, so they say, but the men still went to work. Now if a man is going to walk through 10,000 men to go to work, there's no way he's not going to walk through 100.

Let's go flying. I would imagine that, if colliers from other areas saw us, it would lift them a bit as well as our own lads. The lads are getting cheesed off with it.

AH. There are lads saying I'm sick, that's it, I'm going back. Same thing every day — same people go through the picket line, and there's no way you can stop them, because of the police...

SC. Give the lads a bit of motivation by going elsewhere,

Stan Crawford, Alan Hodgson, and Keith Greenwood, members of Bevercotes NUM, Nottinghamshire, spoke to John Bloxam.

and I reckon we'll build their spirits up again, which is what it needs.

Do you think a break-away union is on the cards?

AH. Spencerism is coming back. We've had rumours now that they're looking for a President, Secretary and a Treasurer for a Notts Working Miners' Association — something like that.

How do you see things going? General strike?

SC. I can't say. We're getting support from that many different places that if something doesn't happen soon I can see it as a big possibility.

I'll give them a couple of weeks but then other workers will see what's happening and then they've got to come in. Maybe not next week — but by about week 14.

You see, the problem is that people are only looking forward to the next week's wage packet. I've been told myself that I'm looking too far into the future. To me that's absolutely ridiculous.

What kind of support are you getting from other trade unionists?

SC. Well I was told yesterday that the TGWU has donated £1,000 worth of food to the soup kitchens. We've had a hotel bloke pull up in his car.

He said "I've just got a small bit of food for you" and there was about £500 worth.

He said it was just a drop in the ocean to him but £500 worth of food goes a long way the way these women do it, because they're absolutely brilliant.

The shopkeepers up here have been pretty good, even in Ollerton — that surprised us because the community is split. I thought they would say "I don't want to get involved one way or the other". But it hasn't happened.

But most of the money has been going to the union nationally and we're only getting a pittance.

AH. We've cashed insurance policies, sold cars, done all sorts to get money to keep going. But you can only cash insurance policies in once and then they're gone.

So it would be best if money came into the rank and file strike committee direct?

SC. If it goes to Berryhill [area union HQ] it goes to the branch. The branch treasurer is then given an instruction "issue this as petrol money". The single lads get nowt at all and they've got to eat.

Have you heard about Labour Parties and workplaces adopting a pit?

SC. They haven't done that in

coal in Notts to replenish the stockpiles. They may add a little bit, but eventually they've just got to run out. The old stocks of coal are useless unless they are replenished with new coal.

If you picketed say 15 power stations around the country at once, how could the police then concentrate their forces as they have been doing?

KG. They'd hire a jumbo jet, wouldn't they?

SC. If every man that was out on strike came out picketing, then we'd have a better chance of winning.

What is the attitude towards the Labour Party and what it's done so far?

AH. Well they haven't done a great deal really, have they? I mean, even when they asked the MPs to give £5 a week they refused.

They made it voluntary rather than compulsory. What do you think they should be doing?

AH. I think it would help a great deal more if the MPs themselves started coming to the areas like Notts and Wales and seeing it for themselves. Dennis Skinner, Tony Benn and Joe Ashton are the minority. They've been alongside us, on the picket lines as well. But the rest of them haven't.

SC. If they actually knew the truth there would be a lot more for the miners as opposed to being against the miners. We're pictured now as the bully boys and the thugs, child molesters and all sorts. If the public only knew the truth!

Have you heard about the SOGAT workers on the Express and the Sun? That must have given you a boost.

SC. Yes, it did. But it shouldn't be like that. I mean, freedom of the press? The press has got the freedom to say what they like.

Who owns the press? It's not working class people, is it?

SC. Exactly.

Ollerton. But we had an 80 year old woman in London send £100 last week. It was really appreciated: it took care of our colliery for one week.

Do you think you can win without all of Notts being out?

SC. Yes, we will win. It'll just take a bit longer, that's all.

KG. Much longer. It's going to be a long strike.

Can't the Notts coal be stopped by the NUR?

AH. It's the scab lorries. Lorries never cease to go into Ollerton.

Are they union lorries?

SC. No. We know the names of the firms but they're not union members.

Still, they can't produce the

Two pamphlets summing up the ideas of Socialist Organiser. 'Where We Stand' - 20p plus 16p postage. 'How to fight the Tories' - 10p plus 16p postage. Or the two together for 45p including postage. From Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8



Socialist Organiser Editorial

Courts: hands off the unions!

SCABS in Notts are taking the NUM to the High Court to contest the legality of the strike, and the decision of

several NUM areas to suspend from membership workers who have scabbed has already been declared illegal.

The law courts are not a genuinely neutral force, any more than the police are: they are there to enforce laws that serve the interests of the bosses.

Anti-working class laws have to be broken. Trade unions have every right to take disciplinary measures against scabs including expulsion, if they choose.

Fascist

A High Court ruling interfering in that right has implications that go far beyond the present dispute. Members of fascist organisations should be expelled from unions, for example. High Court proceedings in defence of a fascist at North London Poly are part of the same trend.

A court ruling declaring

the strike instruction in Notts illegal will be used to intensify police harassment of strikers and pickets. It may well be a preparation for the

use of the Employment Act against the NUM.

The fight against pit closures can be won only by defying ruling class law.

Polish coal still coming

ACCORDING to the National Union of Mineworkers the Polish 'unions' at an international meeting of miners' unions in Paris last weekend, pledged to do all in their power to stop Polish coal being used to break the miners' strike.

The NUM is particularly concerned that Polish coal imports into Britain are being stepped up through Rotterdam and ports in Ireland.

Polish trade officials deny that extra coal will be exported to Britain this year although they are committed to supply 740,000 tonnes of coal on existing contracts.

Since the Polish 'unions' have no independence whatsoever from the Stalinist bureaucracy, any decision on coal exports to Britain will be taken at governmental level. And the record of the Polish Stalinists is not good. In 1972 and 1974 they shipped coal to Britain throughout the miners' strikes.

The labour movement - particularly dockers, miners and transport workers - will have to monitor the situation carefully and bring maximum pressure to bear - including boycott action - on the Polish government if they continue to ship coal to Britain.

Notts production down

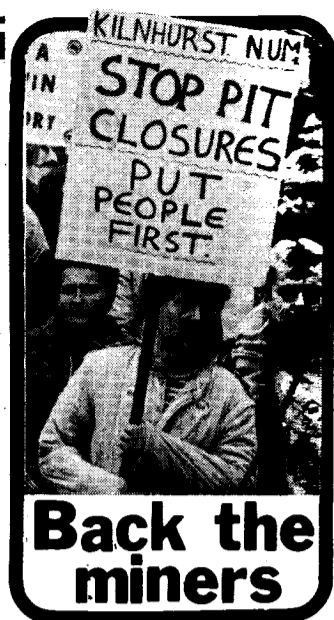
Even the Coal Board's own figures can't mask the real situation in the Notts coalfield. Take the latest figures and the glaring contradictions.

For the week ending May 12, they admit that production in the South Notts coalfield was down 50% on the same week last year. And then they would have people believe that 'absenteeism' (i.e. strikers and others staying

away) was only 13%.

The same blatant contradiction, and incredible claims for numbers of strikers, was also put forward at a meeting of the Bevercotes Colliery Consultative Committee on 17 May 1984.

Management reported production at 80% of target for the week ending 5 May and 46% of target for the following week. And then they stated that 'absenteeism'



Back the miners

was 34% for the first week and then 12.7% for the second.

So with only 12.7% absent (16.1% of the faceworkers), they only managed to produce 46% of target!

Police siege in pit village

LAST Wednesday/Thursday night, 16th-17th, Thorney Abbey Road in Blidworth, Notts, was put under virtual police siege.

160 police in riot gear harassed strikers' families and pickets from Yorkshire.

Annette Holroyd told Socialist Organiser what happened.

"From Monday night onwards we had a constant watch. We were told that we were under observation, and every time we stepped outside my house, just over the road, there were two riot vans there."

On the Thursday a number of the Yorkshire pickets were due to leave. After a drink on the Wednesday evening they went back to one of the houses.

"We all sat round for a couple of drinks. They're lovely people. There wasn't any noise at all because someone was on the phone to his wife in Yorkshire. We all sang 'sshhh' and he was on for a good 'shhh'."

The evening was disturbed by police outside. After the pickets and residents went out, the police abused them and tried to get them into the road."

Pauline Radford takes up the story.

Arrests

"One of the chaps stood at the other gate post and a policeman put his arm around his shoulder and said 'Come on mate, stand out here and talk to me' and he said 'No, if I stand out there you are going to lift me. I'll talk to you here.'"

"Then they talked to Terry (Terry Dunn, Yorks NUM representative) a little bit more, asking him more questions and he just refused to answer."

"They managed to get him over the driveway onto the road and about four or five got hold of his arms and got him into the van."

"Everyone asked why they were arresting him. They refused

NO POLICE BILL!
National Campaign
Against The
Police Bill

NO POLICE STATE!



While the police trample civil liberties underfoot in Notts, the Tories in Parliament are busy pushing through a new charter for police power - the Police Bill. Thousands demonstrated against it last Saturday, 19th.

to give an answer and said 'We don't have to tell you'.

"Then they chucked him in the van and all the men ran up to the van but they slammed the doors in their faces. One of the lads said, 'Come on, take me. If you're going to lift him you should lift the lot of us.' They just drove straight off."

"I went over to see my babysitter. She was terrified. It was my house just next door. I asked her what was the matter. She said 'There's been five or six policemen knocking on the door, and asking questions: Where's my dad? Where's my husband? Where everybody is?' I calmed her down and by then there were 13-14 police vans out in the road. There were policemen lined up across the road. I've never seen so many policemen - hundreds of them."

"I was terrified as was everyone else. I kept clinging hold of my husband so he wouldn't go through the gate. If they went through the gates they'd get lifted."

"All the men said 'What are you doing here, we're not causing any trouble?' The police said they'd had a report about a disturbance - they need at least 13 police vans to check out a

disturbance - 160 police in riot gear!

"The union official said he saw another 20 vans in the next street waiting to come round. 'I feel the police wanted all the Yorkshire lads to go over the gate into the road and get into a riot with the police and then they'd do them all for rioting.'"

"It was definitely an act of deliberate provocation."

"The police said there was a disturbance, yet they went to my house next door, questioning my babysitter, asking where we were. If we were making that much disturbance, surely they'd have known where we were."

"Will this stop me putting up pickets? No way. If these lads come down, they can stop any time. They've not been any trouble to me or my family. The only people who have been trouble to me are the police."

And Annette Holroyd pointed out:

"It's because they can't get us back to work at all. They're going to start frightening us back. But it's having the opposite effect. Instead of frightening us back, it's frightening us not to go back. They are making us more determined not to go back."

"I said to the police at the picket, 'I abhor violence of every kind because I've got three kids and I wouldn't like to see anything happen to them, but when the police start behaving like this, who do you turn to?'"

"If there hadn't been any police there, there wouldn't have been any trouble."

Policewatch

Sheffield Police watch: 73, West Street, Sheffield S1 4EQ.

Kent police monitoring group: Richard De Friend or Ian Grieg Spall; 0227 66822.

Nottingham Co-ordinating Committee Against the Police Presence: c/o Ivan Wels, 11, Osborne St., Sherwood, Nottingham.

Ollerton strike HQ is collecting statements about police behaviour: Pete, Mansfield B62790.

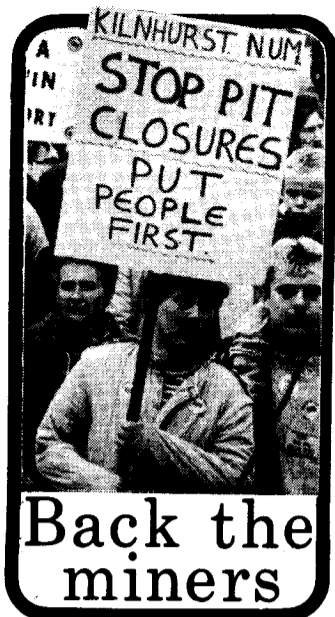
Support committees

Cardiff: c/o Room 219, Transport House, 1 Cathedral Road.
Birmingham: c/o Trade Union Resources Centre, 7 Frederick St., B1 3HE.

South London: c/o Joan Twelves, 1 Alverstone House, Kingston Park Estate, SE11.
Manchester: c/o FTAT, 37 Anson Road, Victoria Park, M14.

Brent Miners' Solidarity Committee, c/o Local Economy Resource Unit, 389 Willesden High Road, NW10. Ken Evans, 459 6221.

Maesteg Trade Union and Labour Party Support Group: Idwal Isaac, 10 Bridge St., Maesteg. (Tel: 738321).



Notts strikers collect £700

A Notts strikers' delegation — Paul Whetton, secretary of the Rank and File Strike Committee, Mick McGinty and Lee Jackson from Ollerton pit, and Ida Hackett from the family support group — collected £671.06 in a 24-hour visit to Basingstoke last week.

They visited Sainsbury's Depot, the Post Office Social Club and Lansing Bagnalls

forklift trucks. The local TV followed them around, and regular collections are now being organised in these places.

The Trades Council benefit raised £210 and £35 was collected in 40 minutes in the town centre.

Next week's paper will carry a full story and pictures of the delegation.

DHSS union gives support to strikers

By a CPSA member in the DHSS

deprive miners' families of a reasonable income during this dispute.

The motion went on to call upon branches to collect money and food for the miners. A leaflet has gone out to all members about the strike. It said this about the handling of claims for benefit:

"The section executive committee therefore wants to express the very clear view that all members should be helpful and sympathetic to miners making claims. Members are of course bound to act in accordance with the rules and regulations of the department but helpful advice and guidance should be given.

"It should be remembered that CPSA strongly opposed the automatic deduction of the £15 assumed strike pay from such claims, and whilst, of course, this cannot currently be changed, members should seek, in every way possible to ensure that miners are receiving their maximum entitlement."

Through government cutbacks the numbers working in DHSS are constantly falling, whilst there are more and more claims to deal

with every day. The pressure of work on staff is intolerable. The DHSS is stretched in normal times, but a with a major strike like this it is close to breaking point.

The workers don't like giving out low rates of benefit, but to fiddle the figures means facing the sack. If you are getting a rough time from the DHSS, put the blame where it lies — with the government, not the workers.

Students raise funds

STUDENTS played an important supportive role in the miners' strikes of 1972 and 1974, and this is once again being demonstrated around the country.

Kent miner Les Douglass recently spoke at the London School of Economics, ten years after he last spoke there, and called on students to support the miners in every possible way.

Most colleges are raising funds and opening up their facilities. Some, such as Newcastle Polytechnic, are organising food collections and have built strong links with local women's support groups.

Durham University Students Union is providing goods at cost price, and LSE is donating the takings from all their games machines.

Without national support from the National Union of Students, some colleges have backed away from supporting the miners through fear of breaking the untested laws governing union expenditure.

The Institute of Education has dropped plans to add 1p on tea and coffee. York University union officials refused to comply with a union mandate to donate £200 to the strike funds and, with NUS support, have since managed to reverse the decision.

Instead York University has set up a Strike Support Committee.

One group of students who have not been visibly supporting the strike, though, is those involved in mining courses. They should remember that if the pits are closed down then they will have no jobs anyway.

The attacks on student unions and on education are inseparable from attacks on other workers. The call to close supposedly uneconomic pits will soon be followed by the call to close uneconomic courses.

Scargill in Staffs

ARTHUR Scargill is to speak to miners in North Staffordshire on Friday, May 25. The visit will give a welcome boost to miners in the area who have remained solidly on strike for the last 10 weeks.

According to the NCB there have been more miners going into work every day for the last 8 weeks. Local pickets calculate that on this basis 150% of the workforce should now be turning in.

In reality, the picture is quite the reverse. The only pit where there is any sizeable scabbing is at Florence. Three hundred NUM members out of 1,100 are working. But even there, one picket, Les Edwards, told us that production is down from 15-18,000 tonnes to only 3-5,000.

It is vital that the organisation of the strike locally is improved, with proper picket rotas drawn up, and strikers contacted to tell them when their turn on the picket is. This could free resources to start proper picketing at Meaford power station.

A further problem is now arising with the distribution of food parcels. The DHSS are now cutting, or stopping, benefits to some families by including the value of the food parcels they have received.

Meanwhile, one picket at Wolstanton, Derek Edwards, told us that the food parcels were no good to him, because he was a diabetic, and, as a single man, he was unable to get any benefit from the DHSS, despite a letter from his doctor. Clearly, the Tories hope, quite literally, to "starve the miners back to work."



"DISAPPOINTED": that's how many people felt after the South Yorkshire demonstration organised by the Regional TUC.

Although the turnout in Sheffield of about 1,000 was higher than expected, the local rallies in Barnsley and Rotherham were

relatively small. There was more confusion than enthusiasm in the demonstrators' minds over the scab announcement the previous afternoon by Len Murray.

In Sheffield, Nurses and staff from Middlewood Hospital succeeded in picketing out the majority of the workforce. There was also a large contingent of engineering workers on the March.

Railway workers in the NUR and some drivers in ASLEF ensured that no trains ran in Sheffield, but the major disappointment was the attitude of bus workers. Despite having held a series of lightning strikes over the past 2 weeks, the union would not organise any action for that day.

One encouraging fact was the

extent to which the March had doubled in size between Spital Hill and City Hall, as many bystanders joined the demonstration.

The Socialist Organiser and Women's Fightback strike bulletins were once again distributed widely in Yorkshire, and were yet again received well by miners and their families.

Shop stewards' conference planned in North West London

Brent Miners' Support Campaign has been in existence for several weeks and well over £15,000 in collections and levies as well as large collections of food have been given to Kent NUM. A transit van of food went down to

Kent coalfield on Saturday, 19th. Kent miners are being put up in the area, one on a permanent basis and several others on a weekly rota.

Picketing has been taking

place almost since the beginning of the strike at Charrington's coal depot in Neasden and the NCB depot at West Drayton.

However, although all rail movements of coal in the area stopped early in the strike, starving Charrington's of its normal supply, some coal is still moving in and out of both depots.

One TGWU driver claimed that he had NUM exemption although it was later discovered he did not.

On Tuesday 15th, there was a mass picket of 200-300 at West Drayton at which the police kept a low profile and management eventually closed the depot for the day.

However, while this was going on lorries delivered coal at Neasden. It is essential that picketing is stepped up at both depots, building on the support that exists locally if such tactics by the NCB are to be defeated.

While the support campaign has been very active in organising collections and benefits, discussion of the way forward for the

strike and more "political" aspects has been much less fruitful. The Communist Party who control Brent Trades Council, have managed to use their links with Kent NUM and the unwillingness of many Labour Party activists to challenge them, to stifle discussion and decisions particularly around issues like the general strike and the importing of Polish coal.

This culminated in them pushing through a vote on the 16th that "divisive issues should no longer be taken".

However, despite the reluctance of the Stalinists a major initiative was agreed. A meeting is being called of shop stewards and workplace reps in the North West London area to discuss support for the miners.

They originally wanted to leave this to regional union officials but backed down under pressure.

A demo is also being organised at the surgery of Rhodes Boyson, Tory MP for Brent North and Social Security Minister.

Edinburgh: unity needed

By Ricky Houston

IN Gilmerton, Edinburgh, the miners when not on picket duty, are busy picking at the bins to get the odd bit of coal or collecting wood to build fires at home so they can heat water for a wash or a bath for themselves or their children.

On Thursdays, the food parcels and collections are shared out according to each family's need.

Even facing such harsh conditions they are still determined to win. As one miner said when I visited the strike centre, "we're not going to give in."

Deemed to be receiving £15 strike pay even though they can get none, miners and their families depend upon the workplace and street collections of money and food to keep them and their families going.

More collections are needed. Other trade unionists are needed on the picket lines. As the slogan chanted on the demonstrations says, "the workers united will never be defeated". The time for that unity is now.

If anyone ever doubts whether they should support the miners, they should visit a strike centre. The solidarity, the appreciation for every little bit of help, cannot fail to move them. Do it now.

Notts strikers need money

The job of organising the strike from within Notts goes on with the Notts Miners Rank and File Strike Committee carrying out the bulk of the work.

Send money or invitations for fund-raising visits to me at 10 Nicholas Place, Tuxford, Newark. Tel: 0777 871500.

PAUL WHETTON (Sec., NMR&FSC)

Towards a general strike

Steve Shukla (Armthorpe NUM) spoke to John Bloxam.

Do you see the possibility of a general strike being any closer than when we last spoke to you a couple of weeks ago? How do you think we can get it?

Well, a lot has happened since then. The TUC has tried to calm the dispute down because it is coming to a head, what with the railway workers beginning their dispute.

If the miners were to be seen to be winning, I think it would be a great encouragement to whole sections of the trade union movement and it could easily develop from there.

Obviously I don't see the TUC calling a general strike under any circumstances.

Do you think the NUM should continue to maintain its present attitude towards the TUC of asking them not to get involved in order to avoid a stab in the back like the NGA and GCHQ disputes got?

Yes, I think they should maintain an attitude of complete mistrust because once they've placed the dispute in the hands of the TUC, then it's virtually sold out.

I think it's a case of organising solidarity through individual unions.

The railway workers' leaders seem to be trying to avoid linking up their pay claim and overtime ban with the miners' strike.

That may be the attitude of the reformist leaderships in the union but I think the rank and file are prepared to put their jobs on the line when it comes to supporting the miners and refusing to move coal.

And once they're involved in their own struggle they'll come to realise what the miners have been faced with.

Unfortunately, being involved in our own picket line we don't get to see many other workers. But the workers I did meet when I went to London to raise funds, gave a tremendous response.

Do you think the focus of the picketing should still be on trying to get Notts out? Do you think that's a possibility?

No, with the massive police presence it's virtually impossible to get into Nottinghamshire anyway. So the picketing there is ineffective.

26 cars went down there yesterday and only one got through - four pickets - and you can guess the cost of fuelling all those cars. This is money that could have been sent to bolster the striking Notts miners.

The area leadership prefers it if the money lands on their lap, but I think the money should go to the individual branches. That way, we can be sure that it is being spent on picketing and supporting miners' families.

It's very useful when workplaces adopt a pit, so that the money comes straight through.



JOHN HARRIS

Notts strikers in Sheffield: rank and file links need to be built between areas

What should be done about the scabs in Notts? Should they be suspended or expelled from the union?

We can't expel these people from the union, unfortunately, because of the danger that they will set up their own breakaway union. The question is in what manner can you discipline them?

If you try and fine them every week they work it will be ruled out of order by the courts, so it may not be possible to do anything to them. It's their own consciences they'll have to live with. There's always the possibility that their scabbing will break the strike.

If they were to try and form a breakaway union it would come to bloodshed in Nottinghamshire. We could never allow Spencerism to return, or the NUM to be fragmented or destroyed by scabs.

What do you think should happen in Nottingham now?

The picketing should be left to the Notts miners and we should be hitting the steelworks because the kid gloves have got to come off. Eleven weeks, now, and nothing has happened. The steelworks have got to close.

There is some picketing going on. Yesterday, pickets went to Scunthorpe steelworks.

The picketing is organised on an area basis. The union officials

of each branch have to accept a sealed envelope. So targets are picked out by faceless bureaucrats who sit in an office.

What we need are rank and file strike committees based on each pit and coordinating with each other, rather than leaving it to officials who've never even seen a picket line.

Committee

The best way to build a strike committee is to have all the leading militants and pickets from each pit onto a strike panel. And then send delegates to an area panel, and coordinate everything from there.

These people sitting in an office haven't been on a picket line yet. They read the papers and watch the TV. That's the only way they glean any information.

We've discussed setting up such a committee in Yorkshire, but there's been a lot of difficulty trying to coordinate any action, because it would all be unofficial and the officials would try to stamp on it.

It should be possible to get one going in the next few weeks because the militants will get fed up with the messing around that we're doing now.

Has there been any attempt to link up the militants in York-

shire with militants from other areas?

No. None whatsoever. We've seen colleagues from other areas on the odd demonstration, but they could be a totally different section of workers for all we know. This is one of the problems with the NUM. It still acts as a federation.

Scargill came to power on the crest of a rank and file movement within the NUM and he's just allowed it to deteriorate until it's virtually non-existent. We need to build up that structure.

Miners despise the leadership of the Labour Party but the response from individual rank and file members of the Labour Party has been tremendous.

And some individual MPs have put their money where their mouth is.

We're winning now. All these right wing Labour reformist MPs

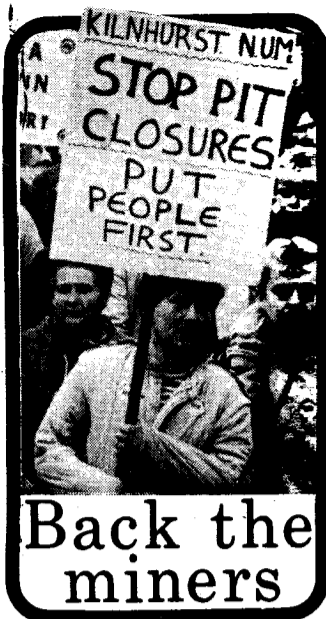
are all coming out of the woodwork, trying to resolve the dispute on behalf of the Tory government. No, we're winning.

To my mind, it just shows how worried the Tories are when they deploy 8,000 police on a full-time basis.

It's hardening the resolve of the miners. Hardly any cases have been heard against arrested miners. Most of them have been adjourned until July. I think they are hoping to get the strike out of the way and then sling them all in jail. Obviously they dare not do it at the present moment.

Labour Councils shouldn't be paying the police. The police are playing a political role - the suppression of the miners' strike on behalf of the Tory government.

As far as I'm concerned we can last out indefinitely, until we win. We cannot envisage a return to work on the NCB's conditions.



Back the miners

'This is political'

Ann Crowder spoke to miners' wives in Ollerton about the women's pickets there.

We're there to fight for our sons, not just our husbands. That's why we go up. And if the men are getting picked up by the police the way they are, then we've got to get on the pickets as well.

The police have started arresting women now as well. Haven't they?

Well the first time we went up, it was to see how far we could go with the police, and we got a lot of hassle. They set up to barriers to try to stop us. We got through the first barrier but the second lot really laid into us. Some of us have beautiful bruises to prove the point. There are a lot of women around the country who support you.

Well, our problem here is lack of funds. The treasurer of the local union is against the strike and he's holding onto the purse strings even though the National Executive have told him to release the funds to the striking miners.

So what funds we have, have come from national level and we've had to fend for ourselves and raise funds.

Do you think there's a link with other struggles that are going on. In Nottingham, they've just threatened to close the general hospital, and in Ollerton there's problems about health care. Do you think it's all tied up?

Well Maggie's going mad with everything, isn't she? We're not just fighting against pit closures, this is political. If we can bring down the government in the process, all well and good. We need to kick her out. She's ruining the education system, she's ruining the National Health Service, the lot.

Women against pit closures

- Dalkeith, c/o Dalkeith Miners' Welfare, Dalkeith, Lothian.
- Fish Cross, c/o Fish Cross Miners' Welfare, Fish Cross, Clackmannanshire.
- Durham, c/o Heather Wood, 18 Hallfield Drive, Easington Village, Peterlee, Co. Durham.
- Kent, Kay Sutcliffe, c/o Aylesham Miners' Welfare, Aylesham, Kent.
- Thurnscoe: Sheila Jow, 105, Lidget Lane, Thurnscoe, Near Rotherham.
- Blidworth. Doreen Humber, 50, Thorney Abbey Road, Blidworth, Mansfield, Notts.
- Edlington: Veronica Balderson,

- 62, Blowhall Cres., Edlington, Doncaster.
- Maesteg: Teresa Parry, 13 Charles Row, Maesteg, West Glamorgan. (Tel: 738825).
- Birch Coppice wives' group, Wendy Coxson, Tamworth 896069
- Barnsley. Ann Hunter, 5 Packhorse Gn, Silkstone, near Barnsley phone 791187.
- Maerdy Wives Support Committee, c/o Maerdy Strike Centre, Ferndale 755 301.
- Oakdale, Gwent: 82 Markham Cres., Oakdale, Blackwood, Gwent. 0495 220158.
- Celyen North, Gwent. c/o

- Dorothy Phillips, 13 Thorn Ave., Newbridge, Gwent. 0495 245000
- Rugeley, Staffs: Mrs Jackson, 9 Woodlands, Handsacre, Rugeley. Staffs. Mrs Southwell, Rugeley 6179.
- Littleton, Staffs: 6 Tower Road, High Green, Hednesford. Linda Platen, Hednesford 76614.
- Merton, Durham. Hetton-le-Hall 267641.
- Sheffield Women Against Pit Closures. Kath Mackey, Sheffield 381594 or 454163.
- Sheffield Trades Council Miners Support Committee, c/o Sheffield TC, Trades and Labour Club, Talbot St., S2 2TG. Phone 24964.

The Broad Lefts

What they are and what they must become

Socialist Organiser 35p

35p plus postage from SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8

States in the Third World

Martin Thomas reviews 'Politics and Dependency in the Third World: The Case of Latin America', by Ronaldo Munck. £8.95, Zed Press, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DN.

Ronaldo Munck is an Argentine Marxist currently living in Ireland. The core of this book is a brief comparative history of the labour movements and of the political regimes in Brazil and Argentina.

The most interesting theoretical idea in the book is thrown in, in an off-hand way, in the last chapter. Capitalist development in Latin America, Munck suggests, has moved through three main types of state form.

From the second half of the 19th century up to around 1930 the typical regime was the 'liberal-oligarchic state', where the ruling class was a landed oligarchy drawing its main wealth from exports of primary products. Generally it rested on a variety of pre-capitalist relations of production.

After the Great Crash of 1929 the old primary-product export business collapsed, and the 'liberal-oligarchic state' was typically replaced by a 'nationalist-populist state'.

This 'nationalist-populist state' had a high degree of autonomy from the ruling class, but its essential business was to foster the rise of an industrial bourgeoisie, which in the course of time came to be the dominant section of a single, integrated ruling class together with the landed interests. "Certainly since the 1970s it has been an absolute anachronism to refer to a feudal or even semi-feudal oligarchy..."

Military

The 'nationalist-populist state' broke down, says Munck, chiefly from inability to deal with rising working class militancy, and was replaced, through a series of coups in the 1960s, by 'modern military dictatorships'.

Those military regimes have drastically increased inequalities of income and ruthlessly attacked working class organisations. But the results have been very different in Brazil — a tremendous expansion of industry, led by the state — and in Argentina — a virtual de-industrialisation after 1976. Munck explains this difference fundamentally from the higher level of organisation and combativity of the Argentine working class.

Munck sees the 'nationalist-populist state' (and also, per-

haps, the 'modern military dictatorship' — it is not quite clear) as having accomplished, essentially, a 'bourgeois revolution from above', on the model of Germany or Italy in the second half of the 19th century. Mexico is a major exception here: it had 'the only truly popular democratic revolution in Latin America.'

Munck is emphatic that 'the capital-wage labour relation has become the axis of bourgeois society in Latin America'; and he takes note of the major Marxist criticisms of the most influential radical theory of Latin American economy and society, 'dependency theory'.

According to the various versions of this theory, the capitalist world system is fundamentally divided into a 'centre' and a 'periphery', and development in the 'centre' (US, Western Europe) creates and goes together with 'underdevelopment' or at best pseudo-development, 'lumpen-development', in 'peripheral' areas like Latin America.

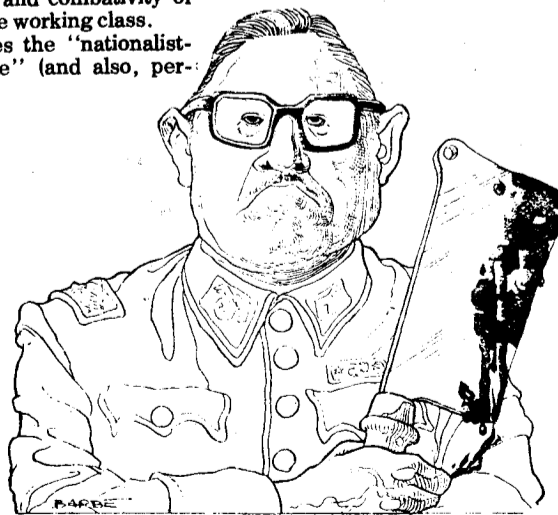
Nation/class

Such theory, says Munck, 'oscillates theoretically between a national and a class approach. When taking the Third World nation as the appropriate unit of analysis there is an inevitable tendency to reduce the importance of the class struggle.' And the theory has 'the assumption that there is an ideal, unrealised but potentially achievable state of autonomous 'non-dependent' development. It is very easy to slip into the idea that breaking the links with the world market will automatically allow for development, if these are seen as the basic 'cause' of backwardness'.

"The Mexican or Brazilian bourgeoisie has a degree of power comparable more to its counterparts in Spain or Italy than to those in Tanzania or Sudan... The close alliance with the transnationals today is not a 'sell-out' as some dependency writers pretend, but simply a rational (capitalist) development model in present circumstances."

Nevertheless — as the title of the book indicates — Munck still wishes to retain elements of the 'dependency' theory.

He is equally ambiguous about Cuba: on the one hand, he considers it a socialist regime, on the other hand he notes that there is no genuine democracy ("room for criticism from below but not for decision-making from below"), and there is a privileged bureaucracy. He draws no sharp conclusions.



Anti-Apartheid Movement
NO TO BOTHA! NO TO APARTHEID!
 Demonstrate on Saturday June 2
 Assemble 11.45am at Speakers Corner for march
 to Jubilee Gardens.

West German workers fight for 35 hours

WEST German bosses have responded to the metalworkers' fight for a 35 hour week without loss of pay by widespread lock-outs.

The metalworkers' union IG Metall began by calling out on strike 13,000 workers in factories around Stuttgart from Monday 14th. The employers' federation responded by locking out 65,000 workers — all the manual workers in factories in the area employing over 2,000 people — from Tuesday 22nd.

The union's strategy is based on selective local action, and it wants regional settlements, while the bosses prefer to up the stakes and want a national deal. The employers have been backed up by a decision of the Christian Democratic government to refuse unemployment benefit to workers laid off because of the dispute.

The demand for the 35 hour week is the unions' response to unemployment, rising fast in West Germany and now at 9.1%. The print union IF Drupa is also running a campaign of strike action for the 35 hour week, and shut down newspapers on Friday and Saturday of last week (18th-19th).

At the huge Daimler-Benz factory at Sindelfingen, near Stuttgart, 21,000 IG Metall members walked out on strike last Thursday before the employer could lay them off. IG Metall has also called 33,000 more workers in the Frankfurt area out from the 21st, and has appealed for a half-day general strike in the Stuttgart area on the 23rd to protest at the lock-outs.

The escalating conflict is cutting across official ideologies of the 'partnership' of labour and capital. IG Metall Stuttgart area leader Eisenman declared: "employers who speak in future about 'partners in society' or their 'dear fellow-workers' will be blushing about what they've done, if they have the slightest feelings of honour".

The stirrings in the West German working class under the impact of the economic crisis are also being reflected in the Social Democratic Party (SPD). After being in government since



Schmidt (sitting) is applauded by SPD chair Brandt (right) and electoral leader Vogel (to Schmidt's left). But in the hall the clapping was only polite.

1966, the SPD went into opposition 19 months ago, and on May 17-21 it held its first congress since then.

The platform had some difficulty defeating a resolution for the nationalisation of the banks and key industries and a call for state direction of investment was accepted. For the SPD, which formally abandoned class-struggle politics and embraced the 'mixed economy' 25 years ago, this was a shift to the left.

As the staid Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung reported with some distaste: "The delegates put themselves vehemently and unreservedly on the side of the strikers".

The congress also made the 35 hour week prominent in a new economic programme for the SPD.

It reaffirmed the SPD's opposition to Cruise and Pershing missiles, and also rejected increased conventional arms spending as an alternative to nuclear weapons.

The retiring SPD leader, Helmut Schmidt, got only polite applause for his insistence on "the path of the SPD towards a return to governmental responsibilities". "We will not give in to the tempting illusion that the world can only progress if it is turned upside down".

The shift to the left in the SPD is very limited: not a single resolution challenging West German membership of NATO got on the agenda, and Schmidt's successor as leader, Hans-Jochen Vogel, who attempts to sit in the centre of the party, was elected leader almost unanimously.

But the West German working class is on the move.

Duarte - a victory for the US

Paul Muddle reports on El Salvador

THE Reagan administration is reaping the first fruits of Christian Democrat Jose Napoleon Duarte's victory in El Salvador's electoral farce.

The Democrat-controlled House of Representatives has passed a military aid package for \$375.3 million to central America. Out of this El Salvador will receive \$129.4 million in extra military aid this year and a further \$255.9 million next year.

The package was approved without any provisions concerning an improvement in human rights conditions.

In a nationally televised address on May 9, Reagan argued that military support to the Salvadorean regime was a moral obligation.

He claimed that Soviet-backed forces were destabilising the elected Salvadorean government. A similar theme was thrashed out by Reagan's national security adviser Robert McFarlane on May 13, when he claimed the Cubans were planning to double their aid to Salvadorean guerrillas.

It is clear that the latest poli-

tical offensive by the Reagan regime was given the green light by the election of the "moderate" Duarte. Duarte has pledged himself to purge the armed forces of corrupt and discredited officers and is committed to further land reform.

If D'Aubuisson of the far-right ARENA had been elected, it would have been almost impossible for Reagan to get the military aid he has been requesting.

Reagan has always portrayed US involvement in Central America as "defence of democracy". The credibility of his case would have received a severe blow with the election of D'Aubuisson a man described as a "pathological killer" by a former US Ambassador and who is clearly implicated in the activities of the death squads.

It is hardly surprising that the White House has now admitted funding pro-Duarte unions — as D'Aubuisson had previously alleged.

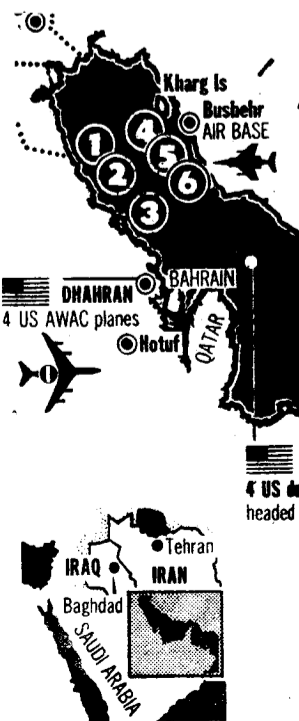
But the election of Duarte is no victory for Salvadorean workers and peasants. During his previous tenure of office, (1980-82), he proved incapable of controlling the actions of the military — indeed he stepped in as a replacement for other Christian Democrats who admitted they were powerless over the armed forces.

Duarte also made half-hearted attempts to carry out land reform, attempts which ended with the intimidation and murder of thousands of peasant militants who had filed land claims under the new law.

In truth, Duarte provides a

reformist facade for the monstrous and unreformable Salvadorean state, which has slain 50,000 since 1980.

Even the most minimal democratic reforms can only be won in El Salvador by the destruction of the state which defends the power of a few landowners and foreign businesses. But democracy alone will not rid the masses of the daily misery and oppression they experience. To achieve that, popular control of industry and land is necessary.



Amnesty indicts the death squads

MILITARY and security forces, and civilian-clothed 'death squads' made up of reserve and active members of these forces, all acting under orders from top government, military and security officials have been responsible for many of the estimated 40,000 political killings in El Salvador in the past five years according to a new report by Amnesty International.

The report also points out that corpses are mutilated to make it difficult to identify the victims and establish the cause of death, but no attempt is made to hide the bodies.

Instead corpses are routinely dumped in heavily patrolled areas near police or military establishments.

These corpses were not meant to be concealed. By leaving the decapitated, mutilated, disfigured

corpses open to public view, a clear signal is given to the community.

Amnesty International considers that the government's total failure to make any effort to apprehend those who dispose of corpses in this way (even though foreign investigators have often seen uniformed troops operating near these notorious dumps) is a further clear indicator that it is in fact the government itself which is behind many of these murders.

A few survivors told Amnesty International how they had been arrested by men in civilian clothes and interrogated at security forces headquarters. One survivor, who recovered from a bullet wound in the head, said that he and other detainees had been taken blindfolded out of the country's capital, San Salvador, line up and shot in the head at close range.



Kinnock with Hattersley. 'a centre-right coalition... for the left, left talking and no action'.

Gulf war may spread

THE possibility that the 3½ year old war between Iran and Iraq will spread to the rest of the Gulf is increasing.

Iraq has intensified its efforts to obstruct Iranian exports of oil from the terminal on Kharg island; and the Iranian regime has launched retaliatory action on the ships of Iraq's Arab allies. To date, 18 ships have been attacked. There is now the direct possibility of Saudi intervention.

The impetus to the escalation came from Iraq, which has begun launching missiles at ships carrying Iranian oil (and other trade) in the Gulf. Some of the missiles have hit the wrong targets, which accounts for early confusion as to who was attacking whom and why.

Iran has repeatedly stated that it would respond to Iraqi military disruption with 'eye for eye' tactics. In the past this has normally been a threat to close the Straits of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf.

Since in practice closing the 24-mile wide Straits is not so simple an operation, Iran has

responded instead by attacking Kuwaiti and Saudi ships.

The Arab Gulf states — especially Saudi Arabia — have been financing Iraq's war to the tune of billions of dollars. The Iranian action, to create a situation in which "either the Persian Gulf will be safe for all, or nobody", is designed to force these states to put pressure on Iraq to hold back.

Iraq's campaign is the result of its increasingly desperate economic, political and military plight. They have stated that their intention is to "force the Iranian regime into a dreadful corner from which there is no way out but peace." But more important, the Iraqi Ba'athist regime hopes to force Saudi Arabia into taking military action against Iran.

The US has been committed to intervention should the Straits of Hormuz be closed. But since the recent debacle in Lebanon, their ability to intervene is much less. Washington has stated that it will intervene only if "invited" to do so.

The Western powers are clearly very concerned about the Gulf flare-up. Gulf oil is less significant than it used to be — today only 18% of the West's oil supplies comes from the Gulf (and a sixth of that by pipeline), as against 50% in the past.

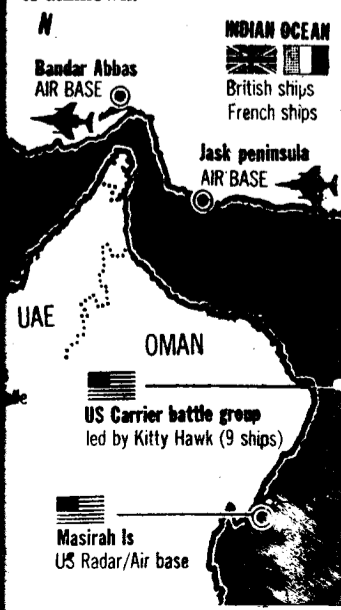
But oil consumption in OECD countries has recently been rising after a long period of decline.

As the recent escalation in the war takes its toll on Gulf shipping generally, pressures for intervention may increase.

THE National Union of Seamen has called on the government and British ship owners to halt all sea traffic to the Gulf until the war ends. They have also called for the Gulf to be declared a war zone, with full privileges for volunteers prepared to work on ships that do go there.

Quite rightly, the NUS has declared no faith in the ability of the British government to protect them. What is needed now is action to enforce their demands.

BANKER ATTACKS: 1. Sunday, attacked by Iran. 2. Monday, attacked by Iran. 3. Wednesday, attacked by Iran. 4. Friday, Iraq claims attack. 5. Friday, Iraq claims attack. 6. Saturday, attacker unknown.



Is Neil Kinnock a socialist?

WE ARE still accused of being unfair to Neil Kinnock. Look at the jump Labour has made in the opinion polls, we are reminded.

OK, but let's look a bit further.

My view is that the clearest sign of Kinnock's opposition to socialist policies was his abstention — let's not mince words — his vote against Benn as deputy leader in the 1981 election.

Kinnock has never been a man of the left. He went along with the left a bit until it was time to get back to the business of getting into government — getting into government on any terms.

Kinnock is not even a Michael Foot style compromiser. The Party should be moved rightwards, he believes.

"We have given the impression", he was saying after the election, "that we are simply not attuned to the reshuffled class system since the '50s, to things like home ownership and taxation. We must convince the British people that we are in favour of success."

Kinnock has given coherent and sustained support to the witch-hunt against Militant and against Tariq Ali. He urged the NEC to abandon a clear cut commitment to unilateralism. He has also pressed for changes in policy on council house sales and the EEC (and Kinnock's move was a right-wing one even if you think that the old policy on the EEC, of British withdrawal, was no good).

He has also made it clear that he favours incomes policy.

To reconstruct the old Labour Party in a new guise, Kinnock was also busy behind the scenes letting it be known that he preferred Hattersley to Meacher as his deputy, and letting it be known that Joan Lester or Phillip Whitehead

Neil Kinnock did say this week that in a hung parliament, Labour would not form a coalition with the SDP-Liberal Alliance. But he immediately offset that by backing up Len Murray's condemnation of regional TUCs calling strikes in support of the miners. Is Neil Kinnock really a left-winger? John McIlroy discusses the issues.

were vastly preferable to Tony Benn in Chesterfield.

What Neil Kinnock wants, and has got so far, is a centre-right coalition in which he will satisfy the left with left talking and no action.

Kinnock makes as few concrete commitments as possible. He won't go to great lengths to revise the existing programme. It is autonomy from programme, freedom for the leadership to do as it will, that he desires.

Doesn't Neil Kinnock have an understanding of how to appeal to ordinary people? Yes but it's a wrong one.

People don't vote for the nice Joe. They are not that silly. Look at the big percentages in the opinion polls of people who can't stomach Thatcher but will vote for her. They know there is trouble and they want hard answers.

Neil Kinnock would like to see himself as a replica of Harold Wilson in 1964. But in 1964 a lot of us poor suckers really believed in "the white heat of the technological revolution".

Today is not 1964 or even 1974. The situation Kinnock will inherit will be more like Ramsay MacDonald faced in 1929.

But the parallels with Wilson and MacDonald are good ones. Like them, Neil Kinnock does not believe in a serious commitment to dismantling the capitalist system. Like them he just wants to civilise it a little.

Like them, he is not a socialist in our sense of the word. Like them, if he gets into

office he will end up attacking those who put him there.

Alas, like them at similar stages in their careers, he has a lot of support. People get tired of continuous battles which appear to have no easy resolution. Those with good instincts but not a very developed political philosophy particularly get weary.

I don't say this in a patronising way but there are many like that in the Constituency Labour Parties. In the early '60s, it was the same. People were looking for some way out of the apparently endless confrontation between the left and the Gaitskellites. Wilson seemed to be the answer.

There is the same desire to unify behind a bright young leader today.

This kind of unity is a fake unity. It avoids all the nasty acrimonious arguments about nationalisation, about democratising the Party, about the mechanics of the Alternative Economic Strategy, about Ireland, and so on — because it stops us addressing the real problems, it stops us getting anywhere near halfway right answers.

It is not simply that Kinnock will abandon Labour's programme. June 9 1983 showed up many of the inadequacies of that programme.

If, as we believe and many of the electorate believed, the AES is a dangerous fairy tale, how do we replace it by a socialist policy? If we are to pursue unilateral nuclear disarmament, then what about withdrawal from NATO? What about an alternative

Arguing



for Socialism

defence policy? Closing ranks means not even beginning to try to answer these questions.

Yet Kinnock tells us that he is the great campaigner. And that's what we should be doing too, the Labour Coordinating Committee tells us.

We should go out of the committee rooms, support and extend real struggles, hit the Tories where it hurts. Too many meetings, too much "revolutionary politics", that's what was wrong with the left, says Peter hain.

It's true Neil Kinnock has done some campaigning. He has been round the hospitals in a second-hand ambulance campaigning to save the NHS. And he was photographed on a milk float, campaigning against French milk. Nurses are electorally popular, and French people aren't.

But when it's come to the real campaigns against the Tories, Neil Kinnock has been holing up in the nearest Trappist monastery.

Where was Neil Kinnock when we picketed Eddie Shah's printworks in Warrington? Where was Neil Kinnock when Len Murray sold out the NGA?

Where is Neil Kinnock now that Thatcher and MacGregor are going for the miners? Where was Neil Kinnock when we marched through Liverpool on March 29? There's £5 for the first LCC supporter who sends us the correct answers.

JOHN HARRIS

Organising socialist youth

READING the before and after reports of YS Conference in Socialist Action (nos. 54 and 55) it rather seems that they haven't learnt anything at all from the conference itself.

Beforehand, Grant Keir promised that "Revo will be linking up with (the independents not affiliated to any political bloc in the YS) and proposing a new newspaper for the YS."

And after the conference (SA 55), Redmond O'Neil says the "growing voice to the left of Militant is the expression of movements like CND and the rise of the Bennite left through the YS itself. The weakness of this force is that it is not yet organised around a coherent project for replacing the Militant leadership with one committed to campaigning in alliance with the Bennite left". And "this type of bulletin or newspaper is now possible and necessary to organise these branches who want to build the YS through campaigning action."

Weakness

At the YS conference there were 69 non-Militant YS delegates. 21 supported Class Fighter, 16 supported the Labour Co-ordinating Committee and 18 supported Revolution Youth with one supporting Workers Power.

That leaves 13 independent delegates. 13 YS branches do not constitute the "Bennite current" you think exists. The "weakness of this force" is that it barely exists!

The Labour Party is a broad, comparatively open party. But the YS is different. It is very, very closed. A YS branch is likely to be dominated by supporters of Militant. Unless new members have previously worked out different ideas, they are likely to become Militant supporters. Militant does appear to the newcomer to be a very active revolutionary group. Working in the YS nationally is more like intervening in another political tendency than working in the broad labour movement.

The YS appears to be far more radical than the Bennites. And, in a sense, it possibly is. The YS has a strategy for transforming society which its adherents believe to be a revolutionary strategy. It talks about the working class running society. The "Bennites", while certainly more progressive on issues like women, lesbian and gay liberation, and some national liberation struggles, present themselves as conscious reformists.

It is not surprising that a big reformist current has not grown up in the YS.

So even while the facts tell you the idea is doomed, Revo still goes on pushing for a YS independent activists' paper. Even though the fringe meeting called to discuss it and regional bulletins only attracted three or four independent YS branches and Revo didn't even raise their idea for the paper.

Given that there are not hordes of youth in the YS ready and waiting to be organised, who is going to make up this broad current? What will

Labour's youth movement is politically dominated by the Militant tendency, which combines Marxist rhetoric with a mechanical strategy expecting the labour movement to progress more or less automatically to socialism through the parliamentary nationalisation of the top monopolies. How, and on what political basis, can Militant be challenged? Jane Ashworth and Clive Bradley take up a debate with Socialist Action and its youth group, Revo.

be the political basis of it? Revo haven't said yet, but we can guess.

Yes, there are lots of youth who can be won to revolutionary politics who are not in the YS. But if these people are your target, you've got to explain why a broad paper would be better for reaching them than your own.

In fact the work of a YS will not be changed by being part of a broad current. It doesn't make a touch of difference whether a YS organises its recruitment activity on the politics of a broad current or Revo's.

A weak-as-water programme tailored to be acceptable to a non-existent broad-left youth current will not help YS branches one bit in making contact with new working class youth.

Alliance

Going into an alliance (against the YS leadership) with organised reformists for specific actions is one thing. Attempting to organise a broader group on a general political programme is something else completely. It won't work to defeat Militant. And it can't work as a long-term perspective for transforming the YS. It would be a very fragile alliance.

Of course we need to organise youth into campaigning

activity. But we also need to win them to revolutionary politics. The whole idea of an alliance with just about everybody cuts across doing that.

Even with a massive influx of independent activists into the YS, actively winning a majority in the YS requires a head-on political fight with Militant. We have to prepare and begin that fight now at the same time as building campaigns.

We also have to give a perspective to new youth who are repelled by Militant that goes beyond simply 'getting together'. That means winning those youth to an overall revolutionary approach to politics. Setting up regional bulletins, and 'building YS summer camp' are desirable — but they are hardly a perspective for changing the YS politically.

Already we've seen Revo responding to some of the correct criticisms Militant may have by denying their validity. This is especially true on international questions.

Critical

Revo attack us for being critical of the movements of the oppressed that we support. Dominic says "of course Revo refuses to criticise revolutionary leaderships (Sinn Fein and the Sandinistas) . . ." Class Fighter's resolution on Ireland is attacked for including "a reactionary tirade against Sinn Fein and Gerry Adams" because while we called on the YS to support their struggle, we described Sinn Fein as representing "petty bourgeois Republican nationalism"; and Class Fighter is attacked for lining up with Militant on a composite on Nicaragua critical of the Sandinistas.

Dominic is quite right to say that the first responsibility of British socialists is to build solidarity movements



The "Bennite youth current" in YS barely exists

with these struggles. We agree — and that is what we said in the debates and in our resolutions.

But it is not our *only* responsibility. We also need to maintain our ideological independence: we have a programme for international direct working class power, and we do not believe that there is a substitute for the building of independent revolutionary workers' parties.

Avoiding that question plays

right into the hands of Militant. They say you are accommodating to an alien class ideology — and, in the interests of appealing to 'broad layers', you are.

And there are grounds for criticism of Sinn Fein and the Sandinistas. Sinn Fein are not working class socialists: they are, politically, radical petty bourgeois nationalists. They do not have a programme for working class power, and they are, still, committed to a

'physical force' Republicanism that is not adequate to deal with Partition and British oppression, let alone the fact that imperialism is not just British troops.

The Sandinistas have attempted to establish an alliance with Nicaraguan capital; and they are part of the bourgeois Central American Contadora Group. They are, certainly, mobilised to defend Nicaragua from forcible US intervention. So were the Cubans in 1961 — and their victory was enormously important. But their victory did not lead to the establishment of a workers' democracy, and the programme of workers' power still needs to be fought for. That the Sandinistas are exceptionally militant and radical does not mean that they share our politics and programme. So we do need to criticise them.

Campaigns

Campaigns are not enough. Militant are different from other left social democrats in that they see the need for a tightly organised group. Organising an alliance of campaign activists doesn't take on Militant. It must have a perspective for socialism. It must train its supporters to deal with Militant's politics. If it doesn't then you are playing right into Militant's hands. Militant immunise their supporters against us by branding us as nothing more than 'liberal' campaigners. Offering up an alliance which is that would be disastrous.

A tendency which is going to take the YS from Militant must be built around revolutionary politics. It must have answers to questions like the potential power of a Labour government. SA's project rules that out.

LETTER

Don't criticise the Sandinistas!

JANE Ashworth's report on the LPYS Conference at Easter (SO 176) contains some important omissions, and is combined with distortions concerning the intervention of "Revolution" supporters at the Conference.

Astonishingly, in her report comrade Ashworth omits to mention the two most important developments at the LPYS Conference. First was the solidarity given by the whole of the Conference to the Sandinistas, symbolised by the standing ovation given to the Sandinista youth. This marked a clear shift from the previous LPYS sectarianism towards the FSLN.

Second, the LPYS agreed to go all-out to build the June 9 anti-Reagan demonstration — again a sharp break from previous LPYS practice. This welcome change of direction for the LPYS is one which supporters of "Revolution" fought for and seek to extend.

At the same time it is not the case that Revo's tactic at Conference was "to water down criticisms of Militant to little more than objections to Militant not campaigning",

although a central critique we make of Militant is their reluctance or refusal to participate in broad-based progressive movements which they do not control, e.g. CND, around Greenham, international solidarity campaigns.

No; we had, and have, a dual approach. First, a political and ideological struggle against Militant's wrong positions, e.g. their view of the socialist transformation/revolution, and their refusal to give unconditional support to movements of the oppressed and oppressed nationalities.

Carried out

(The reason we were unable on Conference floor to develop this is due to the fact that we were almost entirely carved out of the debates by Militant-controlled Standing Orders Committee and the Militant chairpersons).

Combined with this we support a joint campaigning approach on those questions where Militant have made some steps forward. In this latter category we put the June 9 demonstration and the new-found support for the Sandin-

istas already referred to.

We make no apologies for believing that this approach can best be taken forward by the launching of a new activists' paper in the LPYS for all who share this aim (a project derided by Socialist Organiser). It is clear that neither Class Fighter nor Revolution on their own can posture as an alternative LPYS leadership at present.

Our task is to organise the hundreds of new activists who, while joining the LPYS, are repelled by Militant's sectarianism, but who are also not yet convinced of the need for a full revolutionary Marxist programme.

More serious are the distortions on international solidarity. The article states: "Revo refused to criticise the movements that they wanted the LPYS to support. On Ireland, Revo wanted to delete our criticisms of the IRA." In fact the resolution referred to didn't mention the IRA.

What we *did* attempt to delete was a reactionary tirade against Sinn Fein and Gerry Adams as representing "Republican petty bourgeois

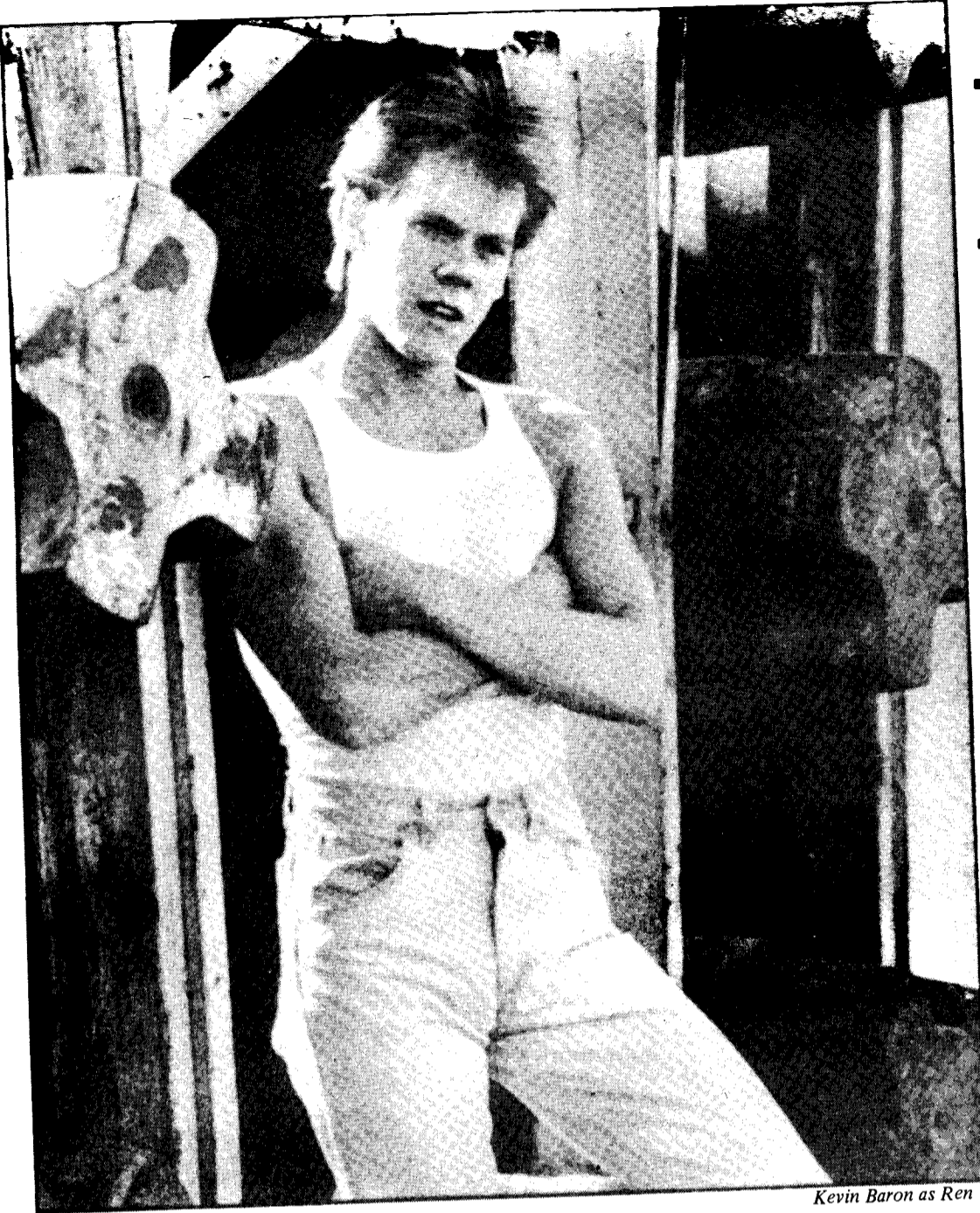
nationalism", in a situation where the main job of socialists in Britain must be to solidarise with Sinn Fein and develop the dialogue between Sinn Fein and the Labour Left.

What your readers may also be unaware of is that Class Fighter supporters lined up with Militant on Nicaragua. Despite cheering the Sandinista Youth to the echo, Militant and Class Fighter then voted through a resolution which said the FSLN were attempting to "compromise with imperialism" and "following a potentially disastrous course for the Nicaraguan revolution".

What hypocrisy! Of course Revo refuses to criticise revolutionary leaderships in this way, particularly at a time when the FSLN have mobilised the entire country under arms to *confront* imperialism.

I suggest that if your readers want a more objective review of the LPYS conference, they should read the report in Socialist Action No. 55.

DOMINIC JOHNSON,
Oxford East LPYS delegate.



Kevin Bacon as Ren

Footloose and free?

A YOUNG man from the big city comes to a small town to discover that religious bigots have imposed frustrating restrictions.

Dancing, rock music and alcohol are all illegal. Certain books are banned. What is worse, many or most of the youth seem to go along with it and regard him as a trouble-maker.

The scene is set for a crusade to change local attitudes and rock the small town boat.

The out-of-town youth, Ren, with a group of friends, launches a campaign for a high school dance to be permitted.

'Footloose' is the latest of a number of films that incorporate music, dancing and plot in a way that is less than a musical but more than just a movie with soundtrack.

Clive Bradley reviews 'Footloose' currently showing in London at the Plaza 2, Piccadilly.

Neither music nor dancing nor plot are as good as 'Fame'. But the basic idea is a good one.

The first problem with Footloose is that it doesn't really strike the right balance. When people 'spontaneously' break into an obviously choreographed dance routine, it seems a bit incongruous.

There are two nice dance scenes — first when Ren (after an evening of heavy frustration) takes to leaping around a railway yard at night in a highly athletic manner (as seen on Top of the Pops), and

second when teaching his friend to dance (to the tune of 'Let's Hear it for the Boy').

But on the whole the enthusiastic dancing (a bit too good, for people who presumably haven't had a chance to practice — and body popping?) just seems a bit silly.

The second problem is that the film can't make up its mind how to portray the local bigotry. At the beginning it seems very sinister and Ku Klux Klan. But as time goes on, the local establishment appear to be figures of fun rather than fear, and the arch-bigot preacher turns out not to be such an arch-bigot after all.

The film reaches a high point of tackiness when Ren quotes Biblical sources to the local council to persuade them to allow the high school dance. He fails, but they get round the technicalities with the blessing of the preacher.

There are some good performances. Kevin Bacon as Ren is a dashing young sex symbol (although not exactly James Dean) — even if it comes as a bit of a disappointment to discover that a stand-in did all the cartwheels and somersaults. And the friend who thinks he can't dance provides all the best laughs.

The preacher's wife has a quivering lip that could outmatch Sue Ellen in any competition. And the preacher's daughter (who ends up getting her man) actually succeeds in portraying the rebellious spirit the film is presumably about.

Not an unenjoyable film but not one to watch twice either.

SCIENCE

Keeping 'Star Wars' science fiction

By Alex Simpson

THE present US administration projects the spending of \$23 billion between now and the end of the decade to finance Ronald Reagan's "strategic defense initiative". The "initiative", nicknamed Star Wars, would have particle beam weaponry deployed on orbiting satellite stations above the earth, capable of destroying Soviet missiles with their deadly rays.

A particle beam weapon fires a beam of atoms or electrically charged ions at a very high speed (approaching the speed of light). A beam of atoms would be just like a very small fast bullet (and could be defeated by armour plating) but a charged beam could be deflected by a magnetic field round the target, while both types of beam would be severely weakened if they had to pass through the atmosphere.

Lasers have already been used to knock out satellites but could easily be defeated by coating the target with mirrors.

Therefore, neither laser or particle beam weapons seem to offer much advantage to either super-power.

The Pentagon has already applied for \$1.7 billion to one of the armed services committees of the Senate. In the two houses of Congress scepticism about the whole project is growing, affecting even the most hardline anti-Soviet and pro-Reagan people.

There is more and more evidence to question not only the underlying strategic

assumptions of the "star Wars" initiative, but upon even its technical viability.

The Pentagon claims that the United States must match the Soviet Union in its relentless military build up. It also alleges the Russians are committing vast sums to the development of particle beam weapons.

The most objective analyses of Soviet military strength say that the USSR's build-up

has been anything but relentless in recent years, and between 1976 and 1981 the annual growth rate for Russian military spending actually declined from 4% to 2%.

If the USSR is spending large amounts on trying to build space-based laser weapons, it is very unlikely to see much return for its money for many years. The technical barriers to be overcome by either side to achieve a workable system are considered by most American scientists to

be near insuperable.

This view is reflected by two top level reports. One, to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, expresses the opinion that the chances of building a workable "Star Wars system" is "so remote that it should not serve as the basis of public expectation or national policy".

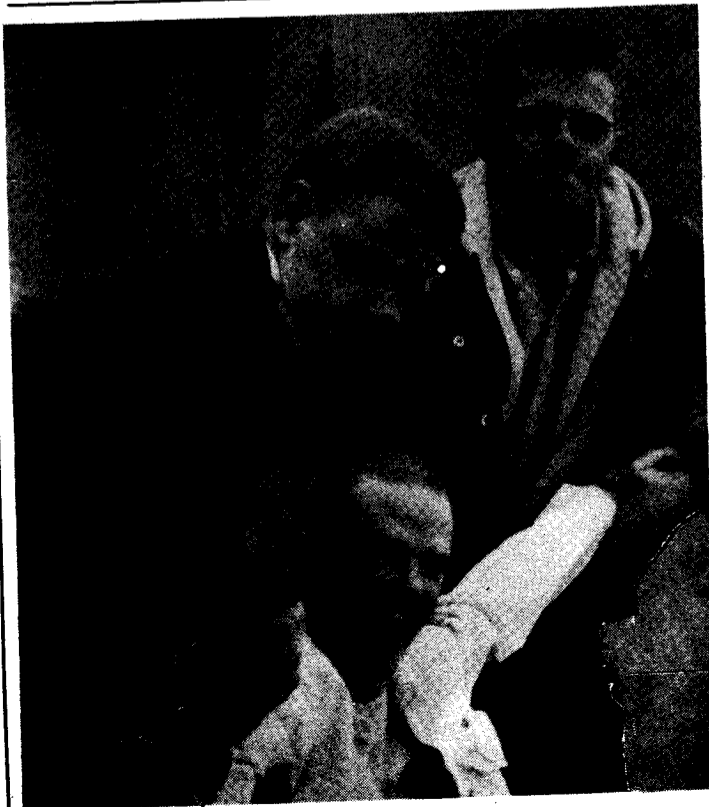
Another report, commissioned by the Pentagon itself and written by a panel of twelve weapons analysts, comments that such a system

"may prove unattainable in a practical sense".

The Reagan administration, after making such a fulsome public commitment, feels that it cannot back down despite the evidence of its own experts, and must push ahead regardless.

Perhaps, though, the weight of science fact will prove so overwhelming that "Star Wars" will remain science fiction.

Source: *The Guardian*, Thursday April 26, 1984.



Bronski Beat

WITH the present fad for not-quite-out-of-the-closet gay bands, the appearance of a political and very-out-of-the-closet gay band is a breath of fresh air. Bronski Beat's first single — which seems set to be a hit — is out on Friday (May 25).

It's a song about being gay, being ridiculed and hounded by family and other youth, and running away to another town.

"Pushed around and kicked around always the lonely boy/You were the one that they'd talk about/Around town as they put you down."

It's a very moody record, dominated by the voice of singer Jimi Somerville, with a catchy chorus: "Run away, turn away, run away..."

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Labour women back the miners

THE National Conference of Labour Women on May 12-14 in Swansea was three days of sunshine and sea-air — but the most lasting impressions were made not by the surroundings but by the women themselves, and especially the women who are now organising the struggle against the Tories.

Miners' wives were honoured guests at every meeting. Delegates from Liverpool pleaded passionately for our support of their community's struggle to retain services vital to women and children in particular.

Black women, so few of whom were there, asked for our support in the setting up of black sections in the party. Coachloads of women from West Glamorgan lobbied the rally on Sunday night asking for the Party's opposition to the Labour council's cut in bus-passes for school children.

The women from Welsh mining villages told us of their support groups, which were organising food collections and food parcels for 700 families in one village. The hardship of the strike was evident but so was the fierce determination of the women to win.

Sustain

They impressed on us that only the support of the whole labour movement could win the strike. Families are now reaching crisis point. Women from Nottinghamshire told us of the special hardship of the 10,000 strikers there, receiving no financial help and mocked by their neighbours.

We were asked to go back to our areas and organise support groups to collect food and money to sustain the strikers and their families.

The conference itself was proof of the importance of the women's organisation.

And demand a proper say within the Labour Party... Sue Arnall reports on Labour Women's Conference.

Many delegates spoke of the campaigning work of their women's sections and the resolutions passed represented a high level of discussion in the local branches.

Several emergency resolutions were passed. No. 6 demanded that the Labour leadership give unconditional support to the miners' struggle and implement the 50p levy, and that Labour Councils waive rents, offer free meals and take up the question of police tactics.

No. 2 committed us to supporting Liverpool Council, and No. 4 condemned the expulsion of six members of Blackburn CLP.

Of the many important resolutions passed, many were concerned with women in employment — concerned to oppose the sex-segregation which keeps women's pay low, to strengthen the equal pay legislation and to commit the Labour Party to positive action to advance women's employment.

Women's low pay was a real concern, especially that of home workers and workers in sweat-shops, and many delegates linked this to new technology and to the position of women as child-carers and home-makers. It was clear that women need to organise together in their trade unions and Labour Parties against these dire conditions.

Disabled women were also considered as needing particular help in their demands for decent living conditions and access to regular services.

The plight of women in the Third World was debated, and resolutions passed supporting resistance in South

Africa, El Salvador, Sri Lanka.

Resolutions were passed supporting the NHS, better contraceptive and abortion facilities and an expansion of child-care facilities to meet the needs of parents, children and child-care workers.

Conference condemned strip searches of women prisoners in Armagh prison, in Northern Ireland: but took no position on troops out of Ireland, and had no real discussion on immigration controls or on the EEC.

Probably the most significant decisions were those about the women's organisation itself. It was evident all weekend that our passionate debates were meaningless if no action was taken after the conference. But at present there is no machinery for making the women's conference effective. It can be as radical a talking shop as it likes, but this is pointless without representation on the policy-making bodies.

Elected

So the demand was adopted for five women to be elected by the women's conference directly to the Labour Party NEC, for five resolutions to go to the Party Annual Conference, and for a rules conference to be called to establish proper standing orders for the Women's Organisation itself.

It was also agreed that there should be one woman on each Parliamentary or local government short-list.

Of course all of these changes will need to be adopted at Annual Conference.

However the message from the conference is that women are organising, in support of industrial and local government campaigns and that we will be ignored at the peril of the movement.



Kent women march in Notts to support the fight against pit closures.

Despite the crocodile tears about Hampson

Harassment of gays goes on just the same

By Clive Bradley

FOLLOWING Dr. Keith Hampson's resignation from his government position after a Sunday Telegraph 'expose' of his arrest in a gay night club, pressure is growing for a restriction on police activities and for changes in the law.

The hypocrisy of the media and liberal politicians over

shame, the Liberals took the lead in this.

The amendment was lost (although vague assurances of 'tightening up' the police's behaviour — in London — and preventing 'abuses', have been given by the Home Office).

The amendment would have been a step forward. But it was still hopelessly inadequate. It proposed limiting police powers to arrest only when in uniform.

That would cut down on agent provocateur action as in the Hampson case: but it would do nothing to prevent the usual round of raids on clubs and public toilets and harassment of gay people.

Since the 1967 Sexual Offences Act was passed, prosecutions for 'soliciting for immoral purposes' have doubled, and convictions tripled.

Harassment and arrests by the police are a day-to-day experience for the gay community: and the Police Bill as unamended will make things a lot worse.

the issue is pretty sickening.

The Sunday Telegraph itself is only half-hearted.

They complain that "homosexuals are apparently one of the most affluent minorities in the country (sic) but they still indulge in seedy encounters in public lavatories". The police, therefore, of course, need to "strike a balance between private liberty and public decency." (May 20).

The Sunday Times does concede that agents provocateurs may be a problem, but that didn't stop them printing the original 'expose'.

The press has discovered that plain clothes policemen inviting people into toilets and then arresting them is a bit unfair — but this is the very press that encouraged the hysterical anti-gay campaign against Peter Tatchell last year.

As a result of the Hampson affair, an amendment was moved to the Police Bill last week. To the Labour Party's

Delegation to Palestine planned

OVER 80 labour movement delegates and some 50 observers packed a meeting room at County Hall last Saturday to hear Palestinian and Israeli speakers condemn Zionism and rally support for the struggle of the Palestinian people against national oppression.

The conference, organised jointly by the Labour Movement

Andrew Hornung reports on the LMCP Conference

Campaign for Palestine and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, marks a big breakthrough for the pro-Palestinian/anti-Zionist cause, for the British Labour movement has long been a "safe house" for Zionism.

The Labour Party was passing pro-Zionist resolutions at its conferences as far back as 1920 and in 1945 it actually advocated "encouraging" the Palestinians to get out to make way for a Zionist state.

Workshops and plenary sessions at the conference both demonstrated a solid majority for a campaign to get British trade unions to break off links with the Histadrut, Israel's combination business-union-colonising agency and for the disaffiliation of the Poale Zion from the Labour Party. (Poale Zion is a member of the Societies section).

The platform resolution supported the Palestinian struggle for the establishment of a democratic secular state in the whole of Palestine and the right to self-determination.

As a result of the conference...

to water down the platform resolution by deleting the reference to any intention to break off links with the Histadrut and by introducing implicitly a recommendation of a West Bank state as the settlement of the Palestine-Israel conflict, drew only four votes.

This appeared to be an attempt by the supporters of the Labour Middle East Council and Trade Union Friends of Palestine to get this conference to adopt its platform (a conference mounted by these organisations about two months ago drew only three delegates and fewer than 30 visitors).

The success of the conference vindicates the course adopted by the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine since its founders walked out of the Labour Committee for Palestine when that organisation had been taken over by Labour Herald WRP forces — a coup orchestrated by Ted Knight. Indeed this conference was supported not only by the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine and PSC but

LABOUR MOVEMENT CAMPAIGN FOR PALESTINE NEWSLETTER

Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine c/o Andrew Hornung, 25, Carlton Mansions, Holmeleigh Rd., London N16



Labour Campaign for Gay Rights

fighting in the Labour movement for lesbian and gay male liberation

To join or affiliate, write to Chris Richardson, 21, Darnley Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2DS.

Teachers' pay: make the links!

TEACHERS' unions have escalated their industrial action over this year's pay claim.

This week, thousands of NUT members will join three-day strikes in selected schools throughout England and Wales. After half-term, there are two more weeks of such selective strikes planned.

NAS/UWT members have been called out on half-day strikes as part of their union's "guerrilla warfare" tactics.

The leaderships of both the NUT and the NAS/UWT have had their hands tied by the course of events. If the employers had increased their 3% pay offer to 4½% early on, there might have been a deal. But both union conferences over Easter passed resolutions forcing their leadership to reject a subsequent 4½% pay offer.

The earlier offer of 4½% to Scottish teachers enabled the leadership of the EIS (the Scottish teachers' union) to ballot their members instead of fighting for a better offer. The postal ballot went in favour of accepting 4½% in Scotland by a very narrow margin — 52% to 48%.

The NUT leadership is now pressing for their 12% claim to go to arbitration. This is being opposed by militant sections of the union.

Pay slipped

We had great difficulty in the first place in forcing our leaders to attach a precise figure to the claim. Teachers' pay has slipped by over 30% over the past ten years, and winning the full 12% is only the first step needed to restore our real wages. To go to arbitration will inevitably mean settling on a figure substantially below 12%.

We have also opposed arbitration on principle because the government nominates the "independent" chair of the arbitration panel, and the result is binding on the union side. Arbitration has helped to short circuit any militant action over pay for the past 14 years.

Militant areas and branches including ILTA, (the Inner London Division of the union), have called for rejection of arbitration: the full 12%

By Siu Ming Cheung
(president, Lambeth
NUT, in personal
capacity)

claim to be flat-rated, i.e. at least £20 a week for every teacher; and selective extended strike action, leading if necessary to all-out national action, to win the claim.

For the first time ever, the NUT conference this year voted in favour of a flat-rate increase. In fact it did so three times.

Differentials have widened tremendously over the years as a result of the Houghton inquiry ten years ago, the establishment of separate salary scales and percentage increases over the years.

Most teachers have found themselves trapped in the lower pay scales for years.

The Tory government's cash limits and rate-capping policies are a major obstacle to the claim. To win the 12% we will need to step

up our industrial action.

Unfortunately the NUT is totally ill-equipped for escalation.

Union branches and divisions are forbidden by union rule 8 from calling members out on strike action. Only the national action committee can do that. Teachers have been suspended and even expelled from the NUT for defying rule 8.

The union rules at present also provide for paying striking members their full salary. This means that the strike fund can only sustain a national strike for two days!

What is needed is an immediate national levy to build up the strike fund, plus a recall conference to change the union rules on strike pay and local autonomy.

Teachers will then need to link up with the NUM, CPSA, NUR, NALGO and other unions next in line for battle over pay and jobs.

Only on this basis can we hope to defeat a determined Tory government.



Picketing the Town Hall

ANDREW MOORE

Strike for nurseries

By Nik Barstow

STRIKING nursery workers stayed on all-night vigil outside Islington Town Hall on May 21, following a successful one-day strike by Islington NALGO.

The branch-wide strike to support the nursery workers, who have been on strike for six weeks for more money and more staff, closed most major departments and stopped services to the public.

A branch meeting of over 500 held during the day agreed on further action.

All meetings with councillors and council committee meetings will be boycotted; no payments will be made to contractors or consultants for services supplied to the council and all overtime will be banned.

If any members are victimised

for supporting the nursery workers the branch agreed that we would meet to call an indefinite strike.

Despite the strike, and the other threatened action, councillors at a social services committee meeting on May 21 refused to budge, or even listen.

The council's chair of personnel, Victor McGeer, refused to take hundreds of letters of support and barged his way in, knocking one nursery worker against the Town Hall doors.

Social services chair Rosemary Nicholson is NALGO assistant branch secretary in neighbouring Haringey, but she told Mary Corbishley from Haringey NALGO that she didn't see any contradiction in refusing to support NALGO members in Islington.

The response by most NALGO members to the day's actions showed that the dispute can be won, but Islington's Labour council is determined to make it a long fight.

All out for Barking!

By Jenny Fisher

"ALL-out indefinite strike action of NUPE members in every London Hospital, with accident and emergency cover."

That's the recommendation from the London NUPE Divisional Council for action to support the cleaners at Barking Hospital. Shop stewards will be voting on the recommendation at a meeting on May 31.

After NUPE Conference had passed a resolution in support of the cleaners, the NUPE National Executive adopted an 11-point programme, calling for the London-wide action to be followed by similar action nationwide from June 11.

Strikers at the Barking and sympathisers now have to work hard to publicise their case to London stewards,

while maintaining the picket line.

Ambulance drivers are now refusing to cross the picket line. This could eventually shut the hospital. But in the meantime pickets are having to watch patients getting out of ambulances at the hospital gates, and making their own way into the hospital, while management taunt the strikers, saying that they are making patients suffer.

Management never complain about the notice which has stood outside the hospital since before the dispute, warning that Barking is not a casualty hospital, and if people need emergency hospital treatment they should

go away! And management have been quite prepared to put patients at risk by running the hospital without proper cleaning.

Help the strike: —invite a speaker to a meeting of your union, etc. especially if you're in NUPE phone the strikeline (24 hours) 01-595 4252;

—send messages of support (and donations if you can) to AUEW House, 588, Rainham Road, South Dagenham, Essex RM10 7RA (cheques payable to Barking & Dagenham Health Emergency);

—support the picket line. Visitors and supporters welcome any time (24 hours) mass pickets every Monday morning. Next week's mass picket on Tuesday 29th starting at 6 am, be there by 6.45 am.

'New realism' on CPSA left?

By Penny Barnett

THIS year's annual conference of the CPSA (the largest civil service union), was a mixed blessing for the left.

In spite of the announcement on the final day of conference that the Broad Left had swept the board in the workplace ballot for the National Executive, the mood of the conference remained subdued.

The 1983 conference had seen the beginnings of a hard left/soft left split in the CPSA Broad Left with the formation of "Labour Group". This year that split became more pronounced as the Labour Group cemented its alliance with the Communist Party over pay and the threatened resignation of general secretary Alistair Graham.

The annual Broad Left rally took two decisions of major importance. Firstly, to rise to the challenge issued by Alistair Graham that he would run for re-election if no confidence in him were carried.

Secondly, to leave the incoming NEC an open mandate on pay. This in itself ducked the issue, the decision being taken before

the results of the NEC election were known and in the full knowledge that an emergency motion was on the order paper, reiterating the Broad Left's policy of a £12 a week claim backed up by all-out action to win it.

However, the next morning, the national Broad Left secretary, a Labour Group supporter, spoke in favour of the right wing NEC's motion on pay. His influence was decisive and the motion was carried. Alistair Graham was able to exploit his victory in the media, telling the world that his left wing conference was in the grip of the "new realism".

On Wednesday morning, Graham's next victory was the defeat of attempts to ensure that the no confidence motion would be heard.

Again the influence of the Labour Group and the Communist Party were decisive in this.

However, Alistair Graham's luck seemed to desert him as censure motion after censure

motion was carried by the conference, on YTS, his intervention at the TUC, his role in the NGA dispute, the GCHQ campaign and the Labour Party affiliation campaign.

Perhaps the most significant debate for the civil service trade unions was the censure of Graham for his handling of the GCHQ trade union ban. Conference overwhelmingly rejected the no strike deal offered to Thatcher and accepted by Kinnoch, insisting that full trade union rights should be restored.

Despite this the conference was denied the right to hear from the former branch secretary of the CPSA at GCHQ who has consistently opposed the Graham line and has said she will continue to operate as the branch secretary until such time as the ban is proved legal.

Instead, delegates were issued by Alistair Graham with a circular containing scurrilous attacks on her.

Several thousand pounds were collected for the miners during the conference with overwhelming support voted for them.

Malcolm Pitt, president of the Kent miners, received a standing ovation, as did CPSA workers from Crown Agents, East Kilbride and DHSS Newcastle Central office.

The CPSA Broad Left last week was party to a historic missed opportunity. There is little doubt that a determined campaign with the right candidate could have ousted the golden boy of the new right in the TUC.

Graham gambled on a Broad Left split and he won. What price are censure motions after that?

Women's victories

THE debate on women's issues provided two small victories for the Broad Left women and the Civil Service Women's Rights Group.

Motions calling for the deletion of sexist imagery and gender specific terms from union literature, and for the union's disciplinary rules to be altered so they could be used in cases of sexual harassment, were both carried.

Both these motions had been defeated by the Broad Left conference only six months before but a swing in policy by Militant and vigorous campaigning by the women's group led to the turnaround.

Only a few years ago a similarly worded motion on gender-specifics was literally laughed out of the conference. This year there was only one speaker against the motion and no so-called left opposition to it at all.

The need for disciplinary action to be available to members was shown by the mover of the motion on sexual harassment, who two years previously had attended a CPSA school where a woman had been raped by a fellow student.

Other women came to the rostrum to tell of the sort of harassment that was going on at the conference itself, including one incident which subsequently hit the national press, when a delegate was sent home from the conference early for dropping his trousers at an evening social.

Ironically the victim was then further harassed to the point of

tears by a Sunday paper journalist after a story.

It was quite obvious that many more women were standing up and refusing to allow themselves to be harassed this year, and with the union's disciplinary rules behind them, things can only improve.

May	
Monday	7 14 21 28
Tuesday	1 8 15 22 29
Wednesday	2 9 16 23 30
Thursday	3 10 17 24 31
Friday	4 11 18 25
Saturday	5 12 19 26
Sunday	6 13 20 27

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

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Saturday May 26. "Free Europe from nuclear weapons". CND demonstration in Coventry. Assemble 11.30am Edgewood Park.

Saturday June 9. CND demonstration against Reagan's visit.

Saturday June 9 - Monday June 11. Lutte Ouvriere fete, at Presles (Val d'Oise), near Paris. If you would like to join the Socialist Organiser contingent going over, contact Ellen Taylor, 532 Abbey Lane Road, Sheffield 7.

LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE ON TURKEY

Saturday September 22, from 10.30 at NUR headquarters, Unity House, Euston Rd, London NW1.

Called by Clare Short MP, Richard Caborn MP, Chris Smith MP, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Ernie Roberts MP, Bill Michie MP, and Roland Boyes MP.

Five delegates per labour movement body: credentials £2 (50p unwaged) from "Turkey conference", 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London N7.



CND against Reagan

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION JUNE 9
 US Embassy Encirclement. At midday groups of people who have prepared for the event will encircle the US Embassy until 3.00 p.m.
 March and Rally. Assemble at Speakers Corner at 12 noon. March moves off to Trafalgar Square at 12.30. Rally starts at 2.00 p.m.

Socialist ORGANISER

Target Labour Govt.



Left Labour activists are preparing for the next general election.

The effort will get underway after the Euro-elections on June 14. 'Target Labour Government' will be initiated at a meeting on June 23.

Narendra Makanji, one of the organisers, told Socialist Organiser: "It's an open meeting to prepare for victory in the next general election. We are also going to contact 35 or so marginal constituencies that we have identified, and try to get at least two or three people from each of those constituency Labour Parties."

"The debate will be about what the next Labour government needs to do and what preparations the Party needs to make."



How can Labour repeat Tony Benn's success in Chesterfield at a national level?

Police defend Nazi leader

HUNDREDS of police swamped the 300-strong mass picket of the Kentish Town site of North London Polytechnic on Tuesday May 22.

They made seven arrests after Patrick Harrington - National Front organiser and author of pamphlets about firebombing - came out of the building after being escorted into a seminar by police.

But if things were getting heavy outside the Polytechnic that was nothing compared to what was happening in the seminar Harrington attended.

Report from the North London Poly confrontation

According to Wednesday's Guardian, of the six students present at the seminar, three were physically prevented from walking out in protest by the police who informed them that their actions were provocative and that they risked arrest.

The tipstaff, whose job it is to enforce the court order, himself sat through the seminar, noting down what

was said by the students and even raising objections to the contributions of students.

Fascist Tuesday's demonstration was only the latest in a whole series of actions to stop this fascist organising at PNL.

Students say that his presence in the college is a standing threat to black students or students who express left-wing views in his

classes. The National Front organises not through political discussion but through street violence.

Harrington has taken out a series of injunctions against students and teachers but despite this, the demonstrations have been growing, and the teachers' union, NATFHE have refused to teach him.

The latest legal move is a summons to lecturers to appear in the High Court after refusing to give Harrington's solicitor the names of students photographed on the

demonstrations.

The police had raided the PNL building on Monday night to gain control. As Harrington's taxi pulled away on Tuesday eggs were thrown and for the police that was excuse enough to go in and make the arrests.

The police had already infiltrated the demonstrators and chosen their targets - they didn't arrest the person who threw the eggs anyway!

Then the demonstrators were surrounded by the police and "persuaded" to disperse.

National Union of Students President Neil Stewart said on TV that one hot-head in the crowd had caused the trouble, and the rest could not be blamed.

This is the same 'even handedness' that Neil Stewart applies to all things. It was clear to everyone else on the demonstration that the police caused the trouble.

This dispute has shown how the state will side with fascists, the biased nature of justice in Britain and whose side the police are on. The Newham 8 were arrested for protecting their community, but a leading hard-core fascist is given protection by hundreds of police.

The whole labour movement should support the students at PNL.

Another picket has been called for next Tuesday morning, 29th.

Bathgate truck plant occupies

WORKERS at British Leyland's truck plant in Bathgate, West Lothian, began a sit-in against closure on Tuesday (May 22).

The announced closure, which is part of BL's 1984 Corporate Plan, would lead to the loss of 1,800 jobs in Bathgate by 1986 and a further 440 at the bus plant in Leeds. In Bathgate this would put local male unemployment at over 50%.

The workers, who occupied the plant within minutes after BL announced the closure plans, will be acting in accordance with an AUEW instruction not to move anything out of the plant. The Scottish TUC has backed the sit-in.

Shop stewards' convenor Jim Swan, said that the occupation will continue during talks between union leaders and BL management, and added that it could go on indefinitely. The shop stewards have an alterna-

tive plan, similar to recent STUC proposals, around which the campaign is to be organised.

The closures at Bathgate and Leeds are part of a wholesale rationalisation and privatisation

plan produced by BL management, and approved by the Tory government. Further to closures, BL plans to sell off its profitable Jaguar Cars subsidiary. Next in line for privatisation is Unipart, BL's spares distribution section, and Norman Tebbit has indicated that other divisions of the company could be sold off by the end of 1984.

The closure of Bathgate has been justified in terms of the plant's bad economic performance. In 1977 the plant employed 6,700 workers, gradually reduced to the present figure of 1,800 as BL's market contracted. In the 1981 corporate plan Bathgate was earmarked as the export-directed plant, but between 1979 and 1983 exports fell from 10,000 trucks to 2,700. Partly as a result of lay-offs from the truck plant, unemployment in the area already stands at nearly 20%.

An alternative plan isolated to the future of this one plant is not adequate. Support for the Bathgate action has already come from wide sections of the trade union movement, including the AUEW TASS conference in Bournemouth, which unanimously passed a resolution pledging to fight against the attacks on car workers in Britain.

What is needed now is solidarity action in support of the Bathgate workers and against the Corporate Plan.


Help SO to help the miners

Thanks to many supporters for sending donations this week. We've had £100.85, making a total of £240.85 for May.

But there's still a lot of £5s and £1s out there, waiting to be collected and sent in.

Thanks this week to: Bev Wood, £1; Siu-Ming Cheung, £5; Durham supporters Paul Hetherington, £3.50, Andy Bennett, £5; Mark Osborn, £1; Tim Anderson, £1; Kamal, Northampton, £1; Jeff Slee, £5; James Ryan, £10; Tower Hamlets comrades: Tony Maxwell, £5, Sue Carlyle, £5; Terry Connolly, £1, Andy Chapman, £1.35; Bryan Edmands, £1; and £5 from an Oxford supporter.

Send donations to: 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.



Join the Labour Party. Write to: The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT. Subscription is £7 per year, £2 unwaged, 50p OAPs.

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
"Free Europe from Nuclear Weapons"
 Demonstration in Coventry on May 26. Assemble 11.30am at Edgwick Park, Foleshill Road or Hearsall Common, Hearsall Lane or Stoke Green, Binley Road.
 Rally at Memorial Park. Speakers include: Joan Ruddock, E.P. Thompson, Ron Todd, Alan Bleasdale
 Evening concert at the Apollo with Style Council, General Public, etc.
 Further details phone 021 632 6909